

**ALASKA LEGISLATURE**

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## FOREWORD

**T**he overwhelming majority of America's public schools are safe places where quality teaching and learning occur. But, in many schools, serious problems disrupt teaching and learning and threaten the safety of children and educators. Those problems include gangs.

Some may look at a gang-ridden school and see that school as a failure. When NEA looks, we see community involvement—but involvement by the wrong community. Gangs invade schools when the legitimate community withdraws. In schools where gangs operate, many families can't or don't socialize children, and local community agencies can't or don't contain crime. As a result, a vortex of social problems descends into the public schools which, in turn, can't or don't mind their campuses as they could.

Offering a way to change this situation is the purpose of *Youth Gangs: Findings and Solutions for Schools, Communities, and Families*. In this manual, NEA presents research about gangs and their effect on schools and provides a framework for the entire community to aid in ridding schools of gangs. We offer no panacea and issue no mandates. But we do suggest a framework that will work, if all parts of the community will work together.

I believe you will find the information and suggestions in this manual helpful in your efforts to make all of America's schools safe.

Bob Chase  
*NEA President*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, gangs have dramatically impacted American society. Not only has the number of gangs increased, but the level of their criminal activity has been alarming. Some researchers estimate that the number of gangs increased 241 percent in just two years, from 1991 to 1993; and they report that over 580,000 gang-related crimes occurred in a single year, in 1993 (Curry et al. 1996).

It is unfortunate but inevitable that this gang problem has followed the same community-to-school route of other social problems. Although survey data on the number and impact of gangs in schools are sketchy, anecdotal information and media reports indicate that gangs contribute significantly to crime and violence in the schools where they operate.

Gangs certainly do not operate in every school. The great majority of schools are free of crime, violence, and gang activity. However, in many schools where they operate, gangs can and do cause considerable damage. Even in gang-free schools and communities, media reports of gangs' misdeeds can produce panic or stimulate copycat behavior. If gangs are not trafficking in drugs or weapons, they are engaged in recruiting new members or intimidating students or extorting money from them—activities that tend to arouse student fear, cause absenteeism, disrupt teaching and learning, and result in outbreaks of violence.

To help public schools avoid these problems, NEA advises members and Associations to understand what gangs are and to

take a total community approach to preventing their formation, diminishing their impact on communities, and, if possible, eliminating them.

**On understanding gangs.** Over the years, researchers have defined gangs differently. In 1927, in his classic study of gangs, Frederick Thrasher defined a youth gang "as a socialization agent for the graduation of young delinquents to organized crime" (Jankowski 1991, 3). Other definitions seem to be based on political ideologies and philosophies (Klein and Maxson 1987). In the 1950s and 1960s, these definitions were oriented toward social reform, reflecting the nation's growing liberal ideology. By the 1970s and 1980s, the definitions were descriptive, emphasizing violent and criminal behavior and reflecting the nation's growing conservative ideology.

Although an appropriate definition of a youth gang is still a matter of much debate, the most often-cited definition—and the definition used by NEA—is that of Malcolm Klein (1971, 111):

*... any denotable adolescent group of youngsters who (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in the neighborhood, (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name), and (c) have been involved in a sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or law enforcement agencies.*

On taking a total community approach. As explained in NEA's *Safe Schools Manual* (1996), violence may occur in a school, but it transcends that school. Rather, school violence is rooted equally in a family's dysfunctional way of resolving conflict and in a community's racism, sexism, and high unemployment. Because of this interconnectedness, all sectors own the problem of school violence. The equation that expresses this relationship is—

**Safe Children = Safe Schools +  
Safe Communities + Safe Families**

If children's safety in school is threatened by gangs and gang activity, schools, communities, and families must cooperate to make children's total environment safe. The presence of gangs on school property is not the school's fault, and the elimination of gangs is not solely the school's responsibility. The presence of gangs in schools is *everybody's* fault, and the elimination of gangs is *everybody's* responsibility.

Encouraging an understanding of gangs and a total community approach to their elimination is the purpose of *Youth Gangs: Findings and Solutions for Schools, Communities, and Families*. NEA members must be able to understand the challenge they face and create and work in coalitions that seek the elimination of gangs and the safety of America's children.

## ORGANIZATION OF YOUTH GANGS

*Findings.* This section provides information about why youth join gangs, describes gangs, and discusses the impact of gangs on schools.

*Solutions.* This section reviews the history of solutions that have been or are being tried to solve America's gang problem, presents models for developing anti-gang school policies, and provides suggestions for implementing NEA's Safe Schools Framework by working with communities and families.

*Applying NEA's Safe Schools Framework.* This section outlines and describes steps for eliminating the gang problem through work in schools and with communities and families.

*Appendices.* The booklet's three appendices (A through C) contain a list of exemplary anti-gang programs and helpful organizations, a sample questionnaire for assessing a school's "gang climate," and a reference list for further reading about gang problems and solutions.

## FINDINGS

Reasons Why Youth  
Join Gangs

Characteristics  
of Gangs

Number of Gangs

Impact of Gangs  
on Schools

## FINDINGS

**G**angs pose serious problems for schools. Not only do gang crime and violence disrupt the teaching and learning environment but, more significantly, gang members can injure or kill students and education employees.

The presence of gangs on school grounds has led many educators to formulate policies aimed at reducing or eliminating gang crime and violence. In formulating these policies, educators and community leaders ask several important questions: Why do youth join gangs? What are the characteristics of gangs? How many gangs are there? And, what, generally, is the impact of gangs on schools?

### REASONS WHY YOUTH JOIN GANGS

According to researchers, individuals join gangs for traditional and nontraditional reasons, the traditional being the more preponderant, despite challenges by some researchers, such as M. S. Jankowski (1991) and Ko-Lin Chin (1990). As we proceed with our discussion, differences between these competing views about why individuals join gangs will become apparent.

#### Traditional Reasons

A structuralist view of social organization and social behavior drives the research supporting traditional reasons for gang formation and gang joining. Basically, those who hold this view argue that individuals join gangs because they lack opportunities for participating in mainstream society and its institutions. This lack of opportunity is driven mainly by the poor or working class circumstances in which youth find themselves.

The first to express this view was Frederick M. Thrasher (1927, 1936) in his now classic study, *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago*. Thrasher argued that gangs were a form of youthful association that arose in the slum areas between the central and industrial areas of the city. The main driving force for their formation was the social disorganization of these areas, characterized by a physically deteriorating central city; rapid population turnover; and large, culturally diverse minority populations.

These factors led to the breakdown of social controls that had been exercised mainly through social institutions.

Since then, many scholars have used Thrasher's disorganization theory as a basis for formulating reasons why individuals join gangs. The factors they link to gang membership are those associated with some kind of disorganization or lack of access to mainstream mechanisms for obtaining socially desired resources, such as jobs and education.

According to disorganization theory, gang formation and gang joining are associated with three factors: low socioeconomic status, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility (Curry and Spergel 1988; Johnston 1981; Sullivan 1989; Shannon 1988; Schwartz 1987; MacLeod 1987; Cartwright and Howard 1966; Shaw and McKay 1942, 1969; Shaw 1930, 1942). Gang formation and gang joining also have a relation to class and risk factors, need for protection, and coercion, as follows:

- Gang formation is a subcultural phenomenon in reaction to middle class life and views (Cohen 1955).
- Gangs do not form in reaction to middle class life but because most lower class youth experience a disparity between larger cultural goals and legitimate opportunities to achieve those goals (Klein and Crawford 1967; Jansyn 1966; Cloward and Ohlin 1960). Klein

and Crawford (1967, 67) make the following statement:

*[W]hen . . . boys in a neighborhood withdraw from similar sets of environmental frustrations and interact with one another enough to recognize and perhaps generate common attitudes, the seeds of the group are sown. Added to threats of rival groups are the many ways in which society reinforces this tendency—police behavior, teacher reaction . . . etc. Adolescent behavior and adult and rival group reactions thus reinforce each other, and the range of alternatives open to these youngsters is decidedly restricted. The result is delinquent group cohesiveness, however tenuous.*

- Gang formation is less a reaction to middle class life and views than it is a result of lower class life, and it has a history dating back many centuries. Gang formation is assisted by six lower class, focal concerns: trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy (Short and Strodtbeck 1965; Miller 1958).
- Gang joining is associated with a number of risk factors, such as association with known gang members, presence of neighborhood gangs, having a relative in a gang, failing in school, having a delinquency record, and abusing drugs (Spergel and Grossman 1995).

- Youth join gangs for protection or because of coercion. For gang members in Philadelphia, being a gang member means slightly decreased fear, a reduced sense of being in danger, and a decreased fear of victimization (Sheley and Wright 1993; Savitz, Rosen, and Lalli 1980). These researchers find, however, that being a gang member does increase the likelihood of victimization. And other scholars find that, for some youth, becoming a gang member is not their choice, since they are coerced into joining (Yablonsky 1962).

#### Nontraditional Reasons

Those who cite nontraditional reasons for gang formation and gang joining challenge traditional theory in four categories: legitimate values, social disorganization, labeling, and decision making.

- *Legitimate values.* Fagan (1990) challenges the argument that gang members do not participate in mainstream society. His data only partially support the hypothesis that involvement in legitimate institutions would deter gang joining among youth. Instead, they show that gang members participate both in mainstream and deviant activities. Fagan (1990, 206) writes—

*[P]articipation in conventional social roles and activities in families, schools, and elsewhere in*

*the neighborhood did not differ significantly for gang and nongang youths, suggesting that conventional values may coexist with deviant behaviors for inner-city youths.*

- *Social disorganization.* J. W. Moore, D. Vigil, and R. Garcia (1983) find that Thrasher's theory doesn't apply to Chicano gangs. They argue that Chicano gangs began long before the rapid industrialization and urbanization that contributed to social disintegration. In addition, Chicano gangs are long-lasting; retain some of their members into middle age; have remained Mexican American, not assimilating into the larger U.S. population; and restrict most lethal conflict to mostly Chicano gangs, avoiding lethal conflict with other ethnic or racial gangs.

Moore (1985) and M.S. Zatz (1987) reject the "underclass" explanation, a corollary of the social disorganization theory. Rather, Moore bases the formation of many Chicano gangs in the U.S. on sociopolitical events, such as (1) the Zoot Suit riots that stigmatized Chicano gangs; (2) the spread of heroin in the barrios that intensified law enforcement activities there and led to the imprisonment of a large cohort of the young adult population; (3) the Chicano movement of the 1960s that directly affected the

rise of the Brown Berets, who marched and posted guards at rallies; and (4) the violent prison gangs that developed as a result of community repression, leading to further isolation and intracommunity stigmatization. Zatz arrives at the same sociopolitical explanation for the formation of Chicano gangs in Phoenix, Arizona.

- *Labeling.* D. Downes (1986), M. Morash (1983), G. Pearson (1983), and W.J. Chambliss (1973) assert that some youth groups that are traditionally viewed as gangs are not gangs at all. These researchers blame the media for what they call mislabeling.
- *Decision making.* M.S. Jankowski (1991) offers a direct and new challenge to traditional theory, providing reasons why certain individuals decide to join gangs and portraying gang members as not very different from nongang members. According to Jankowski, gangs provide their members with material incentives, financial security, and physical protection; and they tend to solidify their members' commitment to the community. He also asserts that—(1) gang members are only slightly more likely than nongang members to come from broken homes; (2) gang members are as likely as nongang members to feel close to their families of origin and, thus, tend not to see gangs as

substitute families; (3) gang members are only slightly more likely than nongang members to drop out of school; and (4) those who join gangs are not enticed into them by charismatic leaders but have specific reasons for joining, and those who do not join gangs see no value in joining them.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF GANGS

Even though gangs have developed their own colors, languages, and ways of interacting among themselves, they all display characteristics which, in broad strokes, paint a picture of a "gang." At the very least, gangs display five characteristics. They tend to—

1. Develop along racial and ethnic lines.
2. Develop as male dominated groups, with females as appendages.
3. Express their culture through unique colors, dress, language, and graffiti.
4. Stake out their own territory.
5. Operate as an organization.

### Racial and Ethnic Development

Overwhelmingly, gangs develop along racial or ethnic lines (Huff 1990; Goldstein and Huff 1993; Vigil and Yun 1990; Ko-Lin Chin 1986, 1990a, 1990b; Robinson and Joe 1980; Loo 1976; and Miller 1975).

Perhaps the most obvious and powerful explanation for this phenomenon is that race and ethnicity are important stratifying factors in American society. For many immigrants, race and ethnicity are the factors that keep them in low economic and social positions. And, historically, youth have joined gangs because their race or ethnicity was a sign of that status and because of discrimination, exploitation, and economic struggle. In their gangs, these youth have found self-worth, higher status, acceptance, and personal protection.

Historical studies of gangs and the circumstances of their formation tend to corroborate this view about race, ethnicity, and gang membership. In discussing the history and emergence of Chicano gangs in Southern California, for example, Vigil and Long (1990) show that Chicano gangs have persisted in Chicano communities since the Mexican revolution of 1813, when waves of immigrants began to settle in California. This long history of Chicano gangs has institutionalized gangs in many of California's Chicano communities. The "Zoot Suit" riots during World War II further solidified Chicano gangs in the community because these groups were routinely beaten by roving bands of servicemen and Anglo citizens in the Los Angeles area (Bogardus 1943).

On the East Coast, the need for protection and access to mainstream mechanisms for upward mobility fueled gang formation (Haskins 1974; Firestone 1976). In the 1920s, the emergence of these gangs is linked to the settling of Irish immigrants in Manhattan (Haskins 1974). After the Civil

War, other European immigration led to the emergence of gangs of various nationalities in northern and southern cities. And, in the early 1900s, gangs of European ancestry emerged in Chicago (Thrasher 1927, 1936).

### Male-Dominant, Female-Marginal Development

Demographic profiles of gangs and their membership consistently indicate that the vast majority of gang members are male and that, if females belong at all, they are appendages to the gangs.

- In his early work, Thrasher (1936) rarely refers to female gangs.
- Cohen (1969) suggests that about 6 percent of the delinquent individuals who were arrested in the early 1960s were female but that only about 1.4 percent of the gang arrests at that time were female.
- Collins (1979) finds that, in New York City, male gang members outnumber females by 20 to 1, and Miller (1975) finds that females make up about 10 percent of gang members.
- A police study by Bobrowski (1988) shows that, of some 2,984 offenses, only about 3 percent were committed by females. And Spergel (1986) shows that between 5 percent and 2 percent of the offenders were female in gang incidents that occurred in Chicago between 1982 and 1984.

Why are there fewer females in gangs and fewer female gangs? Esbensen, Huizinga, and Weiher (1993, 199) suggest three reasons for this perception:

*(1) most gang research has been conducted by men, (2) reliance on official data and/or purposive samples of gangs, and (3) an actual historical change with females becoming more involved in gangs in the latter part of the twentieth century.*

Even though females have been involved in gang activity since the mid-1880s (Asbury 1927), their involvement has been problematic. That is, girls have most often been appendages to male gangs, although there is some indication that girls are beginning to form their own gangs (Chesney-Lind 1993; Moore 1991; Campbell, 1991, 1990, 1984; Fagan 1990; Harris 1988; Hagedorn 1987; Morash 1983; Hanson 1964; Rice 1963; Bernard 1949)

### Cultural Expression

Gangs have a particular culture and unique cultural components, the most important of which are attire (dress and colors), graffiti, and language (verbal and signing). These cultural components appear to identify gang members and nonmembers and facilitate intergang and intragang communication.

Identification of gang and nongang members is accomplished through clothing and colors. For example, members of the Crips, a Los Angeles-based gang, tend to wear clothing with Oakland Raiders markings. Black is their color. In contrast, members of

a rival gang tend to wear clothing with Cincinnati Reds markings. Red is their color. Both groups take these markings very seriously: Youth have been killed for wearing the colors of a rival gang.

Intergang communication is accomplished through graffiti, which are inscriptions, drawings, or messages made on public surfaces. Gangs use graffiti to stake out their territory. In the area where they appear, these markings tell others, including rival gangs, that so-and-so gang considers this area to be its turf. Gangs also use graffiti to communicate threats or impending events. For example, a name of an individual above a homicide code signifies that this individual is slated to be killed. And gangs can also use graffiti to challenge rival gangs, as when an "X" or the graffiti of one gang are placed over the graffiti of a rival gang in its turf.

Intragang communication is accomplished through elaborate languages that are verbal and nonverbal. Gang members use particular code words, slang, and hand signs.

### Territoriality

Most gangs can be identified territorially; that is, they tend to stake out particular neighborhoods or areas as their own. This territory or turf is staked out by means of graffiti, and it is usually the community in which gang members were reared.

Gangs organize territorially for control and identification. According to researchers, gang members, who are outside the mainstream and who have little control over the

political and socioeconomic issues that affect their lives, seek control over their community in compensation (Collins 1979; Ley 1975). This control extends to all kinds of activities within a community. Collins (1979, 68-69) states:

*[S]treet gangs have been known to actually control the activity and events of certain streets and blocks. They attempt to control playgrounds, parks, and recreation centers . . . to the exclusion of all other gangsters. . . . Other gangs have been known to march in front of business' residence, exhibiting guns and weapons, inferring "keep your mouth shut."*

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Researchers have also noted that part of this control is economic. According to W.B. Miller (1977), communities become enterprise zones for illegal gang activity. In their territory, gangs can engage in such illegal activities as weapons and drug trafficking. They can also prey upon the local population by engaging in robbery and extortion.

### Organization

Basically, researchers view gangs as loosely or tightly organized, and they generally base their views on gangs' internal workings rather than on their external activity, such as expansion and alliances with other gangs. Both of these factors are important, however, especially as there is some indication that some gangs have migrated from their original territory to other parts of the country.

**Loose Organization.** A number of prominent scholars have viewed gangs as being only loosely organized (Klein 1968; Short and

Strodtbeck 1965; Yablonsky 1962; Thrasher 1936). By loosely organized, these scholars seem to indicate either or both of the following statements: (1) that gangs are in a state of steady change in membership, activities, and leadership; and (2) that gangs lack role definitions and expectations for their members. Yablonski (1962, 286), for example, points to diffuse roles, limited cohesion, impermanence, minimal consensus of norms, shifting membership, disturbed leadership, and limited definition of membership expectations. Klein (1968) refers to the gang as an amorphous mass.

**Tight Organization.** Gangs have also been portrayed as tightly, or highly, organized rather than as random and unstructured gatherings of individuals (Collins 1979; Sherman 1970; New York City Board 1960). That organization takes the following forms:

### Horizontal and Vertical Integration

Horizontal integration, most often linked to Black and Hispanic gangs, is the most predominant form of gang organization, especially since gangs with similar names have migrated to various states and regions of the country. The report of the New York City Youth Board (1960, 23-24) refers to horizontal integration, as follows:

*The horizontally organized group is more likely to include divisions or groupings from different blocks or neighborhoods comprising youngsters of middle or late teens with little differentiation as to age.*

*The horizontal group may, and usually does, develop out of the vertical or self-contained group structure.*

Vertical integration is the less common form of gang organization. It means that the gang is self-contained and that all gang activities are performed within the confines of the gang. Some vertically integrated gangs employ an age-based division of labor in which age groups perform different activities. As their members age, they assume more authority. In his study of New York City gangs, Collins (1979) discusses such vertical integration based on age.

#### Other Characteristics

Gang organization can also be characterized by alliances, cliques, size, types of members, leadership, and territory.

1. *Alliances.* Since Thrasher's early study in 1936, criminologists have noticed that gangs form alliances with other gangs for specific reasons, such as protection and gaining an economic advantage (Baber 1988b; Bobrowski 1988; Reiss 1987; Sarnecki 1986; Collins 1979; Short 1976; Miller 1975; Sherman 1970).
2. *Cliques.* Scholars have come to realize that cliques are the basic building blocks of gangs and that the central or core clique determines the character of the gang (Klein 1971; Downes 1966; Thrasher 1936; Shaw and McKay 1931). Cliques within the same gang may compete, and such competition may fracture the gang if one clique leaves to form another gang. Thus, gangs can be seen as a system of loosely knit cliques.
3. *Size.* The size of a gang and the existence of cliques within it have been the source of much debate. Some scholars say that gangs are basically small units (Gold and Mattick 1979). Others say that gangs range in size from 25 to 75 members (Collins 1979) or from 30 to 500 members (Morris 1980). Still others say that gangs range in size up into the thousands of members (Spergel 1972; Miller 1975; Short 1976). According to Klein (1971), the size of a gang may increase during two important events: when a crisis occurs and, during the fall, when gang members identify new recruits in school.
4. *Types of Members.* Gang existence and structure are based on the need for group maintenance and development. Thus, there are at least three types of gang members: core, peripheral/fringe, and wannabes/recruits. As the driving force of the gang, the core gang members run the gang, relate easily and interact frequently with each other, and determine the nature and character of the gang (Reiss 1987; Sarnecki 1986; Pritchess 1979). Peripheral members associate with the gang

and its members, but they are not members and are not viewed as members by actual gang members and others. Wanna-bes or recruits tend to be younger than gang members, and they aspire to belong to the gang.

It is important to know about gang types for, once the leadership of a gang has been identified, a community can neutralize the gang by neutralizing its leadership. In addition, by understanding that core members, not wanna-bes or fringe individuals determine the character of the gang, a community and school can avoid exaggerating the problem. And, by understanding that core members are most likely to be involved in illegal behavior, communities and schools can focus their efforts (Sarnecki 1986; Klein 1968).

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5. *Leadership.* Because some gangs are well organized and others are not, neither the researchers nor the gang members themselves understand gang leadership. The debate revolves around whether the leadership is a function or a role and whether the leader is a psychopath or sociopath or both or is a normal and socially capable person. It is generally agreed, however, that gang leaders are capable individuals whose traits are respected by the members.

6. *Territory.* A gang is defined by and organized around the territory it calls its own (Spergel 1986; Horowitz 1983; Moore 1978; Thrasher 1936). But why is territory important? Ley (1975, 252-253) offers an excellent answer. In the inner city, certain groups are marginalized, and there is a "territorial imperative . . . for the establishment of a small secure area where group control can be maximized against the influx and uncertainty of . . . the city." Graffiti are visible signals of gang presence; they define a gang's turf. The closer one gets to the core of gang territory, the more dense and diffuse are that gang's graffiti. Graffiti express a gang's ownership of a territory and, at the center of territory marked by graffiti, identification and control.

## NUMBER OF GANGS

Recently, the National Institute of Justice undertook research to estimate the number of gangs, gang members, and gang-related crimes in the United States. Using conservative and "reasonable" estimating procedures, researchers G. David Curry, Richard Ball, and Scott Decker (1996) revealed the following information for 1993:

Table 1. Number of Gangs, Gang Members, and Gang-Related Crimes in 1993

|                     | Conservative Estimates           | Reasonable Estimates              |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| GANGS               | 8,625 (76.7 percent over 1991)   | 16,643 (241 percent over 1991)    |
| GANG MEMBERS        | 378,807 (51.9 percent over 1991) | 555,181 (122.7 percent over 1991) |
| GANG RELATED CRIMES | 437,066 (843 percent over 1991)  | 580,331 (1,152 percent over 1991) |

Clearly, there is some sense, with data to back it up, that many jurisdictions in the United States have been affected by increased gang crime and violence between 1991 and 1993.

## IMPACT OF GANGS ON SCHOOLS

When gangs exist in the community, they have a tremendous impact on the social relations, behavior, and safety of the students and education employees in that community's schools. According to the research—

- Gangs see schools as their turf and tend to recruit from schools (Spergel 1996; Bodinger-DeUriarte 1993; Arthur and Erickson 1992; Boyle 1992; McEvoy 1990). Gang members use schools for drug and gun trafficking, for extortion, and for recruiting members.
- Gang members tend to be truant more often than other students (Quartles 1993). In addition, gang members intimidate other students, who may miss school out of fear.
- Gang members bring drug activity into schools (Burnett and Walz 1994; Bodinger-DeUriarte 1993; Quartles 1993; McEvoy 1993).
- Violence is more likely to occur in schools where gangs are present than in schools where gangs are absent (Burnett and Walz 1994; Quartles 1993; Gaustad 1991; Quartles 1993).
- Schools having a gang presence also have weapons-trafficking problems (Trump 1993).
- Gang members use intimidation and aggressive or violent behavior to inculcate fear (Trump 1993; Quartles 1993; Gaustad 1991).

## SOLUTIONS

History of  
Anti-Gang Efforts

Types of Solutions

NEA's Safe Schools  
Framework

## SOLUTIONS

**M**any schools, communities, and institutions have attempted to deal with gang-related problems. However, several reviews of the literature reveal that researchers haven't presented their information in a manner that is helpful for policy development. That is, the literature lacks a framework for policy development.

In this part of *Youth Gangs*, NEA attempts to fill that void. We review the history of anti-gang efforts, look at types of solutions, and introduce NEA's Safe Schools Framework.

### HISTORY OF ANTI-GANG EFFORTS

Past efforts at dealing with gang problems fall into four broad categories: detached work programs, deterrence/incarceration programs, comprehensive programs, and opportunities/provisions programs. Individuals must come to some basic understanding about these programs before they develop plans for working in schools and communities and with families to reduce gang activity.

1. *Detached work programs.* These kinds of programs grew out of early efforts by various organizations to reach out to troubled urban youth (Brace 1872, cited in Bremner 1976). For research on these programs, the reader is referred to Thrasher (1963, 1927) and Kobrin (1959). The reader is also referred to two of the more prominent criminologists advocating detached work pro-

grams: Irving Spergel (1965) and Malcolm Klein (1968). In *Street Gangs and Street Workers*, Klein (1971, 46) writes,

*Detached work programs are grounded in one basic proposition: Because gang members do not ordinarily respond well to standard agency walls, it is necessary to take the program to the gangs. Around this simple base of a worker reaching out to his client, other programmatic thrusts then take form—club meetings, sports activities, tutoring and remedial reading projects, leadership training, family counseling, casework, employment training, job finding, and so on. In addition, a community organization component is often built into the program. . . . The primary change mechanism is the rapport established between workers and gang members.*

2. *Deterrence/Incarceration Programs.* During the 1970s, views about delinquency and gangs turned conservative. Leading to this new view were several key events, including the heavy influx of drugs into urban areas, the failure of rehabilitative programs, and the sweep of conservatism across the nation. The provision of opportunities to steer gang members into other endeavors was still advocated, but that viewpoint was no longer the driving force behind programs aimed at stemming the tide of juvenile crime and violence. The new viewpoint emphasized ruling with an "iron fist" (Hagedorn 1988), and

programs of deterrence and incarceration began to claim center stage. According to Spergel et al. (1989, 148),

*A philosophy of increased social opportunity was replaced by growing conservatism. The gang was viewed as evil, a collecting place for sociopaths who were beyond the capacity of most social institutions to redirect or rehabilitate them. Protection of the community became the key goal.*

The deterrence/incarceration philosophy, of course, also had a major influence on new gang programs. Detached workers were replaced by surveillance/deterrence workers. And these new workers were assigned to a specific geographic area rather than to specific gangs. Their work focused on rumor control, dispute resolution, and violence reduction.

*The worker is, in essence, part of a dramatically energized community control mechanism, a "firefighter" with a more balanced eye on the consequences as well as the cause of gang violence. Success is measured first in violence reduction, not in group or individual change. (Maxson and Klein 1983, 151)*

3. *Comprehensive Programs.* These multifaceted programs or models are complex and are aimed at long-term solutions (Goldstein 1983). Generally, they have 13 dimensions: law enforcement, prosecution, corrections, probation/parole, judicial, executive, legislative,

federal agency, local government, schools, community, business/industry, and the media.

4. *Opportunities Provisions Programs.* Guiding this type of program is the assumption that failure and lack of appropriate opportunities among youth are important factors leading to their joining gangs (Spergel et al. 1989; Thompson and Jason 1988; Klein 1968; Quicker 1983; Morales 1981). One important set of solutions, then, involves providing youth with opportunities by which they can succeed in other areas. Spergel et al. (1989, 147) describe opportunities provisions programs as—

*. . . a series of large scale social resource infusions and efforts to change institutional structures, including schools, job opportunities, political employment . . . in the solution not only of delinquency, but poverty itself. Youth work strategies were regarded as insufficient. Structural strain, lack of resources, and relative deprivation were the key ideas which explained delinquency, including youth gang behavior. The structures of social and economic means rather than the behavior of gangs and individual youth had to be modified.*

Although the logic of such an approach seems to be on target, there has been relatively little evaluation of opportunities provisions programs. However, where evaluations have been conducted, the news has been good (Thompson and Jason 1988; Klein 1968).

## TYPES OF SOLUTIONS

In this section, we look at the focus of past programs designed to reduce gang violence, the status of gang problems, and program implementation. Table 2, below, helps us view the relationship among these three broad areas and NEA's Safe Schools Framework, which will be discussed in the next section.

Table 2. A Preliminary Model for Developing Anti-Gang School Policies

| Status of the Gang Problem | Focus of the Gang Program | Program Implementation | NEA's Safe Schools Framework |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Emerging                   | Prevention                | Integrity              | School                       |
| Chronic                    | Intervention              | Comprehensiveness      | Community                    |
|                            | Suppression               | Intensity              | Family                       |
|                            |                           | Prescription           |                              |
|                            |                           | Gang-relevance         |                              |

### Status of the Gang Problem

When dealing with gangs, one must know the status of gang problems in the school and in the local community. Specifically, are gang problems emerging, or are they chronic? This question is important because the seriousness of gang behavior varies proportionally with gangs' status as emerging or chronic.

Determining whether gang problems are emerging or chronic involves three issues.

1. Are gangs organized? If they are, we can assume that their communities are plagued by chronic gang problems.
2. Is serious violence a part of the problem? Serious violence, such as beatings and homicides, characterize chronic gang problems. At times, the homicides are particularly brutal because organized gangs use lethal weapons to make statements.
3. Are gangs involved in illegal economic or business activities? Long-term gangs have

moved into illegal business dealings, such as drugs and firearms trafficking.

#### Focus of the Gang Program

Essentially, programs aimed at reducing or eliminating gang problems have focused on prevention, intervention, and suppression.

1. Prevention strategies attempt to prevent gang behavior and problems before they start. However, these strategies are mostly used when gang problems are emerging or when youth who are at risk of becoming gang members may be receptive to redirection.
2. Intervention strategies, which are used in emerging and chronic gang situations, attempt to prevent an existing problem from getting worse. The strategies take the form of barriers or mediation efforts that prevent gang members or potential gang members from following the wrong path. For example, after-school recreation, work-study programs, or programs aimed at improving academic achievement are considered intervention strategies because they attempt to redirect certain kinds of behavior.
3. Suppression strategies, which tend to deal with gang problems swiftly and efficiently, are excellent short-term strategies. Even though they can be harsh, involving incarceration, probation, and police surveillance, suppression strategies are reactive. And, as they certainly have neither eradicated gang

problems nor deterred youth from joining gangs, it is not clear whether or not they are effective in the long run.

#### Program Implementation

At least five criteria may be used to judge the effectiveness of any gang program. But these criteria may be used better in the program's implementation. If they are used to judge the program, then they are important to consider when implementing a quality program.

1. *Integrity.* Program integrity refers to the correspondence between the program as planned and as it is actually carried out. If a program deviates from its plan, it lacks integrity. To be sure, changes to a program can be made when specific strategies are not working. However, even these changes must be examined for their consequences and for how they fit into the overall plan.
2. *Comprehensiveness.* Anti-gang programs must be comprehensive, because gang behavior is complex and the result of many behaviors learned over the years. Indeed, some Chicano gangs have histories dating back over 100 years.
3. *Program Intensity.* Intensity refers to the amount, level, or dosage in which a plan or program is delivered. For example, if a plan calls for home contacts between the worker and the at-risk youth, contacts of three to four times a week accomplish more than do those occurring once every two weeks.

4. *Prescriptiveness.* Program prescriptiveness refers to tailoring or individualizing the program intervention to fit youth and their unique problems. It is important that youth be identified so that workers may develop specific plans and interventions. Those looking into gang characteristics may want to consult the following research:

| Characteristics to Consider                                       | Researchers to Consult  |
|---|---|
| Core and marginal members   | L. Yablonsky. 1967. <i>The Violent Gang</i> . New York; Penguin.  |
| Leaders and followers   | J.A. Needle and W. V. Stapleton. 1982. <i>Police Handling of Youth Gangs</i> . Washington, DC: National Juvenile Justice Assessment Center.   |
| Old and young members   | I.A. Spergel, et al. 1989. <i>Youth Gangs: Problems and Response</i> . Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. |
| Youth from thieving, fighting, or racketeering subcultures        | I.A. Spergel, et al. 1989. <i>Ibid.</i>   |
| Youth with varying degrees of aggressiveness and gang involvement | M.W. Klein. 1968. <i>The Ladino Hills Project</i> . (Final Report) Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development.      |

5. *Gang-Relevant Techniques.* In the evaluation process, researchers use two conceptual measures, the proximal and the distal. Proximal measures are tied directly to a program's goals and objectives. Suppose, for example, that the goal of a project is to reduce youth's contact with gang members and that the intervention selected to accomplish that goal is frequent contact between case workers and those youths. In the evaluation, one would measure whether such contact has actually reduced contact between the youths and gang members.

Distal measures, on the other hand, aim at residual effects. With the same goal, that of reducing youth's contact with gang members, suppose that the intervention selected is employer-youth contact. In this evaluation, one would measure whether the introduction to the job world has indirectly affected the youth's reading ability or overall school performance.

As important as these two measures are, it appears that few, if any, interventions are designed with both in mind; that is,

to elicit both gang aversion and improved academic performance among delinquent youth. When Klein (1968, 150) evaluated one of his own projects, he found that—

*Unfortunately, few techniques exist that are comparably effective with theft, rape, malicious mischief, auto theft, truancy, and so on. This lack of specific behavior related techniques forces the worker to fall back upon general intervention procedures such as individual or family counselling, group activities, job development, and so on, procedures which at best have only an indirect relationship to delinquency producing situations.*

### NEA'S SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

Research about gang formation and gang reduction has guided NEA's efforts to help schools formulate policies and programs to eliminate gangs and to make schools safe. Based on this research, NEA believes it imperative that plans include not only the schools but the communities and families from which schools draw their students. As described in NEA's *Safe Schools Manual*, schools become or remain safe when all concerned accept and operate according to the following equation:

*Safe Children = Safe Schools +  
Safe Communities + Safe Families.*

NEA bases this approach on two facts:

First, schools are not any less safe than other similarly populated communities. As places where children congregate for up to six hours a day, schools are where violence occurs when the problems children face in their communities or in their families are not resolved in those two places. In fact, school violence is a societal problem, with its roots as much in a family's dysfunctional way of resolving conflict as in a community's racism, sexism, and high unemployment.

Second, school violence transcends the school. Because children are first socialized in families, they model the behavior they observe or experience in their homes. If children grow up in families which practice spousal abuse or child abuse or neglect, those children will be more likely to exhibit aggressive or violent behavior in school. They may also model (or fear or become injured to) the violent and dysfunctional behavior they see in their neighborhoods.

Thus, for public school employees intent on confronting the gang problem, NEA recommends—

- **Working within Schools**, which entails establishing a school safety committee, developing and implementing school action and crisis management plans, and continuing to monitor and assess data.
- **Working with Communities**, which entails identifying and working with key community leaders; forming a

community safety board; conducting a community survey; and taking stock and evaluating plans, data, and other issues used in putting together a strategy.

- ▣ **Working with Families**, which entails modeling positive behaviors when educating, supervising, and parenting children; encouraging parental support of and involvement with children; and making education employees more aware of parents' roles in educating children.

**APPLYING NEA'S SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK**

Working within  
Schools

Working with  
Communities

Working with  
Families

## APPLYING NEA'S SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

**T**he first focus of NEA's framework for reducing gang violence is the school.

### WORKING WITHIN SCHOOLS

Over the years, schools have tried to stem the tide of school violence by proposing plans aimed at gang activity, drug abuse, or sexual harassment. Some high schools have eliminated lockers, and some elementary schools have required students to wear uniforms. Other schools have called for random searches for weapons in schools with high levels of gang violence. And still others have called for closed school campuses or the construction of fences around campuses to keep out gangs and other unwanted individuals.

These efforts have not been uniformly successful and have not solved the problem because the systemic roots of school violence and gang activity transcend the school. A solution to these deeper problems—such as a community's racism, sexism, and high unemployment and a family's dysfunctional way of resolving conflict—requires a total school-community-family approach.

### Steps for Working within Schools To Eliminate Gangs

- Step 1      Form a Gang Task Force within the School Safety Committee.
- Step 2      Develop and implement plans.
- Step 3      Continue monitoring and assessing data.

**Step 1:***Form a Gang Task Force Within the School Safety Committee.*

School Safety Committees, consisting of representatives of all education employee and student groups, work with community representatives on long-term solutions to violence.

If gangs are a problem in the district, the first meeting of the full School Safety Committee should contain an agenda item on gangs. Members would discuss the need for additional members who have experience in working with gangs, would discuss gang behavior in school, and would begin the process of determining whether the gang problems are emerging or chronic. They would also create a Gang Task Force, whose duties, to be reported at the next meeting of the full committee, are to—

1. Determine who else to invite to be a member of the School Safety Committee.
2. Develop and collect data on gang problems.
3. Draft a report with recommendations for policy. The recommendations should be based on whether the gang problems are emerging or chronic.

**Step 2:***Develop and Implement Plans.*

After the task force reports, the School Safety Committee should consider its recommendations, first, for more members, and, then, for policy based on the data it has found. Those data, which should indicate an emerging or chronic problem, will form the basis for different types of policy.

*Emerging Gang Problems.* If the data show that gang problems are emerging, policy recommendations will probably include preventive measures alone. Schools would be advised to—

- Focus on preventive strategies. However, it may also be necessary to develop intervention and suppressive strategies. If this is the case, School Safety Committee members who have expertise in this area should be consulted.
- Work with younger children to improve their academic performance and instill positive attitudes about school and achievement. It is also important to reward children for their positive efforts and modest improvement.
- Formulate dress codes aimed at preventing gang dress and behavior.
- Integrate conflict resolution and peer mediation throughout the curriculum. Students need to be taught appropriate behavior for settling disputes.

*Chronic Gang Problems.* If the data show that gang problems are chronic, schools should be advised to take both preventive and suppressive measures, by themselves or in cooperation with the Community Safety Board, or—

- Institute strict dress codes.
- Issue strict rules and regulations about behavior, with sanctions equally and consistently applied.
- Work with gang members directly, and seek their advice for resolving the gang problem: that is, make gang members part of the solution.
- Work closely with law enforcement authorities.
- Ask local businesses to create work opportunities for gang members.
- Help create activities for gang members who have time on their hands; that is, initiate community projects, athletic events, etc.

*Step 3:  
Continue Monitoring and  
Assessing Data.*

So that the School Safety Committee will be kept informed about current and potential problems, it is important to continue the process of monitoring and assessing data and problems. Such problems include changes in the number of competing gangs, in outbreaks of gang violence and crime, in recruiting efforts that seem to be going on in the school, in violations of rules regarding gang dress and behavior, and in the spread of graffiti.

Data gathering might occur in the school and in the community, as follows:

*School Data Gathering and Analysis.* Data collected at the school level should include—

1. Graffiti
2. Gang membership
3. Expulsions related to violations of rules on gang dress and behavior
4. Fights related to gang activity
5. Injuries and fatalities related to gang activity
6. Weapons confiscation related to gang activity
7. Drug use and sale related to gang activity
8. Fear and intimidation related to gang activity
9. Locations of violent or criminal gang activity
10. Dates and times of day when criminal gang activity is likely to occur

*Community Data Gathering.* At the community level, data might be gathered in several gang related areas. Instead of collecting statistics first-hand by themselves, schools may procure data second-hand from the Community Safety Board.

■ Sociodemographic data. These data are important because they not only describe the current situation but can be used to speculate about the future. These data include:

1. Population, especially in terms of race and ethnicity
2. Degree of residential segregation by race and ethnicity
3. Unemployment rate
4. Number of single-headed families
5. Divorce and marriage rates

■ Crime. Selected crime statistics regarding juveniles and gangs are crucial. The focus should be on data that the Safe Schools Committee, especially the gang experts on the committee, feel may alert them to potential problems in the school. The selected statistics include:

1. Drug arrests related to gangs
2. Weapons sales and arrests

■ Violence. Data on the incidence and kinds of gang-related violence include:

1. Drive-by shootings
2. Assassinations and retaliations
3. Gang fights
4. Random gang-related violence, such as initiations

## **WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES**

The second focus of NEA's framework for reducing gang violence is the community.

Over the years, communities have tried to deal with these problems, mainly by proposing and implementing teenage curfews and gun control laws. But community and gang violence have complex sources that resist such remedial measures. A solution to these deeper roots of violence, such as racism, sexism, and high unemployment, require a total and organized community approach.

### **Steps for Working with Communities To Eliminate Gangs**

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Step 1 | Involve key community leaders.                            |
| Step 2 | Form a Gang Task Force within the Community Safety Board. |
| Step 3 | Conduct a community survey.                               |

**Step 1:***Involve Key Community Leaders.*

To reduce or eliminate gang problems from schools, it is crucial for schools to involve community leaders in their efforts. The best way to do this is for the School Safety Committee to help create a Community Safety Board that is controlled, not by the school but by the community.

In creating this board, the committee should identify appropriate leaders who have expertise about gangs and who reflect the community's diversity. Once the board has been established, the School Safety Committee may consider bringing members of the Community Safety Board together for a one-day seminar. The purposes of the seminar would be to—

- Formulate common goals and objectives for dealing with the gang problem in school and in the community.
- Make a decision about conducting a community assessment study. If adequate data on the gang problem do not exist, NEA suggests that such a study be conducted. And, if the Community Safety Board decides to conduct a study, it should take care to design it carefully so that it addresses problems, potential problems, and solutions.
- Discuss who else should be on the Community Safety Board.
- Decide on a formula for selecting the leadership of the Community Safety Board. An educator should not assume this leadership.

**Step 2:***Form a Gang Task Force within the Community Safety Board.*

As most schools and communities face multiple problems, they may find it efficient to create a task force to deal specifically with gang problems. In forming this task force, NEA offers the following guidelines:

- Make sure that members are chosen for their expertise and knowledge about gangs and about the topics that may be necessary to consider at a later date. Those topics include knowledge of survey methods.
- Ensure that the task force membership reflects the diversity of the community.
- Schedule a series of training sessions on gangs and assessment techniques. If task force members have been chosen correctly, they may deliver the training sessions.
- Schedule regular meetings, and arrange to make regular briefings to the larger Community Safety Board.
- Elect a task force chairperson.

Step 3:

*Conduct a Community Survey*

In conducting a community survey, the task force should take stock of selected socio-demographic and crime and violence data.

- The assessment should help the Gang Task Force to develop a set of policy recommendations for dealing with gangs. (See "Gang Risk Factors To Address in a Community Survey.")
- Collect existing data to save time and expense. Again, if the task force has been selected correctly, a member may know if such data are available.

**Gang Risk Factors To Address in a Community Survey**

**Community Factors**

Economic and social deprivation  
Gang presence: numbers of members, key members, colors, and language  
Gang crime and violence: drive-by shootings, drug sales arrests, weapons sales arrests, and fights  
Key places where gangs hang out

**Family Factors**

Family history of gang membership  
Family history of high-risk behavior  
Single-headed families  
Extent of parental involvement in children's lives

**School Factors**

Early antisocial behavior  
Academic failure or poor academic performance  
Lack of commitment to school

**Individual and Peer Factors**

Alienation and rebelliousness  
Antisocial behavior in early adolescence  
Friends who are gang members or wanna-bes  
Gang dress, mannerisms, and language

Step 4:

*Take Stock and Evaluate.*

At some point, the Community Safety Board and the Gang Task Force of the School Safety Committee will have to take stock of their efforts to reduce or eliminate gang-related problems in the community and in the school. They will need to evaluate the programs they have implemented and, to do so, they will need to design an appropriate evaluation instrument. In addition, training will need to be provided, unless, of course, core members of the Gang Task Force or the Community Safety Board have expertise in this area.

If training is needed, the board should design training that includes evaluation skills as a key component. Other components include developing an action plan and focusing on the three essential sectors: the schools, the community, and the family. In designing the training, make sure that participants in the training learn how to—

1. Associate programs to the conditions and behaviors they want to change.
2. Develop an action plan that contains steps for—
  - Identifying and prioritizing the most important reasons why youth join gangs within the community.
  - Selecting strategies that have been tested and evaluated for their effectiveness.
  - Developing goals and objectives for an action plan that directly responds to the problems identified in the community assessment. (Make sure that these goals and objectives are realistic.)
  - Identifying obstacles to executing the plan and resources for overcoming these obstacles.
  - Discussing and establishing appropriate program evaluation strategies.
3. Focus on the community gang problem by acquiring data about—
  - Strategies for mobilizing the community around gang crime and violence.
  - Policies aimed at behaviors and activities that harm the community and school. (For example, a curfew may be instituted.)
  - Communications with the media about how certain factors place youth at risk of joining a gang.
4. Focus on the family by acquiring data on household composition, poverty, joblessness, child abuse, parent training, and early childhood education.
5. Focus on the school by acquiring data about what schools are doing to stem the tide of gang crime and violence.

## WORKING WITH FAMILIES

The third focus of NEA's framework for reducing gang violence is the family.

As their children have entered school and participated in school activities, many families, especially inner-city families, have had to face problems of violence and gangs. For the most part, parents have supported school and community safety programs. But others have not.

### Suggestions for Working with Families To Eliminate Gangs

- 10
- Suggestion 1 Model positive behaviors when educating, supervising, and parenting children.
  - Suggestion 2 Encourage parental support for and involvement with children.
  - Suggestion 3 Make education employees more aware of parents' roles in educating children.

**Suggestion 1:**

*Model positive behavior when educating, supervising, and parenting children.*

For children to grow, learn, and eventually compete as adults in their home towns or in the global society, they must be free of the stress caused by neglect and by physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. In other words, children need to be in a safe and functional family environment.

According to the research, most children who join gangs do so to compensate for the poor or working class circumstances of their families or to acquire the material and power benefits that the gang offers and that their families cannot or will not offer. Therefore, nurturing and creating proper family environments are important first steps to take toward reducing or eliminating gang crime and violence.

To help parents and other adults work better with youth, NEA offers the following suggestions:

- Stress the importance of academic performance, and provide rewards for academic achievements to students at risk. It is not enough to reward superb work only, but to reward work that shows improvement or an effort that may not have been made before. If these rewards begin early and continue consistently throughout the child's school years, they will yield independent academic achievement later.
- Notice your body language when you relate to other adults. This is especially important when situations appear to be stressful.
- Deal with stressful, that is, potential conflict situations, in a mature, nonconfrontational manner. Adults are role models, and children learn their behavior from them.
- Define limits for what is and is not acceptable behavior. Help children develop options and alternatives to unacceptable behavior.

**Suggestion 2:**

*Encourage Parental Support for and Involvement with Children.*

A considerable body of research shows that parental involvement and support are important predictors of student achievement, and that parents and educators must cooperate. Gangs, however, have a negative effect on student achievement. Given the important inverse relationship between academic achievement and gang membership, it is important that parents not only encourage the academic achievement of their children, but also function properly as parents and as advocates for their children.

Ideally, parents can help teach and socialize their children by—

- Demonstrating patience and understanding while their children learn their limits.
- Socializing their children properly by encouraging good social skills and study habits.
- Becoming involved in the education of their children by taking roles in the school, regularly talking to their children's teachers and the school principal, and volunteering for school activities. The intent is to show their children that they, too, find school important.
- Creating a learning environment at home by designating certain times as study time and attempting to provide a

place where studying and homework should be done.

- Setting time aside for discussing school with their children: how they felt about their school day, what they feel happy or proud about, and what problems they may have encountered that the parent can help solve.

Education personnel can do their part to encourage parental support for and involvement with children. They can—

- Reach out to parents, and communicate with them regularly through a face-to-face meetings, newsletters, and notes that are translated into the children's languages.
- Meet with parents during after-school study halls, where parents, students, and educators can talk about the day's events.
- Create a homework hotline that parents and students can use to keep up to date on assignments.
- Offer parenting skills courses at school or in the community.
- Offer training on how to be an advocate for one's child.
- Act as a go-between for the family, the student, and various social services.

---

*Suggestion 3:*

*Make Education Employees More Aware of Parents' Roles in Educating Children.*

If the gang problem is to be reduced or eliminated, education employees must become more aware of parents' role in educating their children. In addition, both the community and the school need to help parents learn and feel more competent in this role.

To help parents in their role as primary educators, education employees need to—

- Identify children who are at risk or who are showing signs of becoming gang members. Once these children have been identified, the school can formulate an intervention strategy involving an appropriate community agency and can suggest that the parent follow up.
- Report gang-related crime and violence to the proper authorities and to the parents whose children are involved in it.
- Reach out to families, and get them involved in the education of their children. This might involve creating a day care program or providing other services to make it easier for parents, especially working parents, to get involved.



## APPENDICES

A.  
Programs and  
Organizations

B.  
Sample  
Gang Climate  
Questionnaire

C.  
References

## PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

### Programs

Broader Urban Involvement and  
Leadership Development  
1223 N. Milwaukee Avenue, 2nd Floor  
Chicago, IL 60637

Community Youth Gang Services  
144 South Fetterly Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90022

Gang Resistance Education and Training  
National Center for State and Local Law  
Enforcement Training, Building 67  
Glynco, GA 31524

Gang Violence Reduction Project  
California Youth Authority  
2445 North Mariondale Street, #202  
Los Angeles, CA 90032

New Turf Project, City of Phoenix  
6245 South Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Paramount Plan: Alternatives to Gang  
Membership  
16400 Colorado Avenue  
Paramount, CA 90723-5050

Positive Alternative Gang Education  
Office of Instructional Services  
Department of Education  
2530 10th Avenue, Room A-15  
Honolulu, HI 96816

Project Brega  
P.O. Box 21365  
Rio Piedras, PR 00928

Project Courage  
Riverside County Office of Education  
3939 13th Street  
Riverside, CA 92502-0868

Project YEA!  
Orange County Department of Education  
200 Kalmus Drive  
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050

Youth Development, Inc.  
6301 Central N.W.  
Albuquerque, NM 87105

### Organizations

National School Safety Center  
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 290  
Westlake Village, CA 91362

National Youth Gang Center  
P.O. Box 12729  
Tallahassee, FL 32317

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
National Institute of Justice  
Washington, DC 20531

Safe Schools Coalition, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1326  
Holmes Beach, FL 34218-1326

## SAMPLE GANG CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE\*

\*From Shirley R. Lal, Dhyan Lal, and Charles M. Achilles. 1993. *Handbook on Gangs in Schools: Strategies to Reduce Gang-related Activities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, pp 68-71. Copyright © by Corwin Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Sage Publications, Inc.

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about your knowledge of gangs and gang activity on this campus and in the community/neighborhood. Your identity is not necessary so *do not* sign your name to this questionnaire. Please attempt to answer all questions. Your input will assist school personnel in establishing a program to address the issues of gangs, gang members, and gang activities.

Circle one:                    STUDENT      TEACHER      PARENT      SUPPORT STAFF

### General knowledge of gangs

What is a gang? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is a gang member? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do gang members dress? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do youths join gangs? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do gang members do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



What do these terms mean?

Gangbanger (homeboy) \_\_\_\_\_

Wanna-be \_\_\_\_\_

Loc (loco) \_\_\_\_\_

Hood/turf (barrio/varrio) \_\_\_\_\_

Set (clique) \_\_\_\_\_

Moniker/Place \_\_\_\_\_

Kicking it \_\_\_\_\_

Flashing \_\_\_\_\_

Court in/out (jumped in/out) \_\_\_\_\_

Bc down \_\_\_\_\_

Dress down \_\_\_\_\_

## Knowledge about the gangs on campus and in the school community

Do you know of any gangs on this campus and in the neighborhood?  YES  NO

If yes, list the names of the gangs you know or have heard about.

---

Have you seen any gang members on campus?  YES  NO

Do you know any gang members personally?  YES  NO

If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_

How many gangs do you think are on this campus? \_\_\_\_

How many gang members belong to one gang? (Guess) \_\_\_\_

What is the total number of gang members on campus? (Guess) \_\_\_\_

How many gang members do you think are in the neighborhood? \_\_\_\_



Knowledge of gang activities on campus

What kind of gang activity have you seen on campus? (Circle the activities.)

TAGGING   GRAFFITI   FLASHING   YELLING OUT   GANG NAMES  
USE OF WEAPONS   INTIMIDATING   HARASSING   FIGHTING  
DRUGS   OTHERS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which of these activities occur the most? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Are there certain locations on campus/near campus where gang incidents are likely to occur?    YES    NO    DON'T KNOW

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what times?    BEFORE SCHOOL    NUTRITION  
 LUNCH    AFTER SCHOOL  
 CLASS TIME (a.m.)    CLASS TIME (p.m.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Who is most likely to report gang-related incidents?    STUDENTS    ADULTS

What portion of the discipline referrals are gang related? DAILY \_\_\_\_% WEEKLY \_\_\_\_%



Impact and effect of gang-related incidents on this campus

What do you believe is the impact of gang-related incidents on school safety?

- NONE    TRIVIAL    SOME    SIGNIFICANT

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

How does the presence of gangs affect the nongang member students, teachers, and the school community as a whole? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does the presence of gangs affect the gang members on campus? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do the gang activities on this campus affect you?       YES    NO

If yes, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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NATIONAL  
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1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036-3290

**HB**

**101**

HFIN

FILE



Alaska State Legislature

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## REPRESENTATIVE FRED DYSON

### HB 101

### Sponsor Statement

#### "An Act relating to charter schools

Updated: February 1, 2001

Contact: Representative Fred Dyson's office at (907) 465-2199

House Bill 101 is intended to extend and strengthen the existing Alaska Charter School Law. The current law on the books is scheduled to sunset on July 1, 2005 (less than 4 ½ years from now). This means that any new charter school cannot be approved for the allowable five year charter. Existing charter schools are having a difficult time securing facility purchase and lease agreements because their remaining contracts are something less than 4 ½ years and cannot be extended beyond 2005.

Some of our charter schools are exciting, dynamic examples of parents being involved in their children's education. Intensive parental involvement has stretched the system in a positive way. Most charter schools are struggling because we have not given them the tools they need to succeed. I believe the demonstrated passionate involvement of parents and the good results indicate we should go beyond eliminating the sunset and allowing for longer contracts.

HB 101 is similar to the charter school law I sponsored last session except that it abandons the effort to mandate a succinct accounting statement to be part of the charter. It also abandons the attempt to mandate distribution of a pro-rated share of local contributions to go to charter schools

HB 101 makes the following changes to the existing charter school law:

- Eliminates the July, 2005 sunset clause.
- Extends the allowable contract length from 5 to 10 years.
- Eliminates the geographic distribution requirements.
- Doubles the cap from 30 to 60 charter schools.
- Clarifies that charter schools are not exempt from competency testing.
- Allows Charter Schools to be counted as separate a school if the ADM is over 150 (reference AS 14.17.905)
- Provides a one-time "start-up" grant.
- Allows for charter school use of safe public buildings with District Superintendent approval.

We have two options: 1) strengthen the charter school law to encourage continued new thinking and foster more fresh education reform, or 2) do nothing and watch the investment of countless hours of hundreds of parents die on the vine. Merely extending the sunset and lifting the cap will not be enough. HB 101 is probably not enough, but it is a step toward quality in public education.



# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA  
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: CS HB 101 (HESS)  
 ( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: DEED  
 Title: "An Act relating to charter schools; and providing BRU: K-12 Support  
for an effective date." Component: Foundation Program  
 Sponsor: Representative Fred Dyson  
 Requester: House HESS Component Number: 141

**Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)**

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

| OPERATING EXPENDITURES | FY 2002      | FY 2003      | FY 2004      | FY 2005      | FY 2006      | FY 2007      |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Personal Services      |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Travel                 |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Contractual            |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Supplies               |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Equipment              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Land & Structures      |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Grants & Claims        | 609.8        | 609.8        | 609.8        | 609.8        | 609.8        | 609.8        |
| Miscellaneous          |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>TOTAL OPERATING</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> |

|                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CAPITAL EXPENDITURES |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|                        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CHANGE IN REVENUES ( ) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)**

|                          |              |              |              |              |              |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1002 Federal Receipts    |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| 1003 GF Match            |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| 1004 GF                  | 609.8        | 609.8        | 609.8        | 609.8        | 609.8        | 609.8        |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health    |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Other (Specify Type)     |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> | <b>609.8</b> |

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2002 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

|           |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Full-time |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Part-time |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Temporary |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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

HB 101 Sec. 6. AS 14.17.905 is being amended to reflect Charter Schools with an Average Daily Membership (ADM) of at least 150, would be entitled to be counted as a separate school.  
 (please see attached spreadsheet)

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, School Finance Manager Phone 465-379  
 Division: Education Support Services Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved by: Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education Date 2/23/01  
 Agency: Education and Early Development

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Version: CS HB 101 (HESS)  
( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Education and Early Development  
Title: "An Act relating to charter schools; and  
providing for an effective date." BRU: Teaching & Learning Support  
Sponsor: Representative Dyson Component: Quality Schools  
Requester: House HESS Component Number: 2147

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

| OPERATING EXPENDITURES | FY 2002        | FY 2003      | FY 2004      | FY 2005      | FY 2006      | FY 2007      |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Personal Services      | 101.0          | 101.0        | 101.0        | 101.0        | 101.0        | 101.0        |
| Travel                 | 5.0            | 5.0          | 5.0          | 5.0          | 5.0          | 5.0          |
| Contractual            | 60.0           | 60.0         | 60.0         | 60.0         | 60.0         | 60.0         |
| Supplies               | 4.0            | 4.0          | 4.0          | 4.0          | 4.0          | 4.0          |
| Equipment              | 2.0            | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          |
| Land & Structures      |                |              |              |              |              |              |
| Grants & Claims        | 1,253.0        | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          | 0.0          |
| Miscellaneous          |                |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>TOTAL OPERATING</b> | <b>1,425.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> |

|                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CAPITAL EXPENDITURES |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|                        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| CHANGE IN REVENUES ( ) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

|                          |                |              |              |              |              |              |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1002 Federal Receipts    |                |              |              |              |              |              |
| 1003 GF Match            |                |              |              |              |              |              |
| 1004 GF                  | 1,425.0        | 170.0        | 170.0        | 170.0        | 170.0        | 170.0        |
| 1005 GF/Program Receipts |                |              |              |              |              |              |
| 1037 GF/Mental Health    |                |              |              |              |              |              |
| Other (Specify Type)     |                |              |              |              |              |              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>1,425.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> | <b>170.0</b> |

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

**POSITIONS**

|           |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Full-time | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Part-time |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Temporary |   |  |  |  |  |  |

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Please refer to the attached sheets for a detailed description.

Sec. 4, AS 14.03.263 provides start-up grant to 16 charter schools at \$500 per pupil. This fiscal note does not project the estimated cost for the additional 44 charter schools authorized by this legislation.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson, Deputy Director Phone (907) 465-8727  
Division: Teaching & Learning Support Date/Time 2/16/01 12:00 AM  
Approved by: Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education Date 2/23/01  
Agency: Department of Education & Early Development

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

### *Fiscal Note Description for HB 101*

Section 1 of HB 101 removes the former requirements that the State Board of Education & Early Development may not approve more than 30 charter schools to operate in the state at one time and shall approve charter schools in a geographically balanced manner. Amended language raises the cap on the number of charter schools to be allowed from 30 to 60. Language related to approval of charter schools geographically is eliminated.

Section 2 requires that charter schools be subject to secondary school competency testing as provided in AS 14.03.075.

Section 3 adds minor revisions to existing provisions and extends allowable charter school contract time from 5 years to 10 years.

Section 4 creates a new Charter School Grant Program. A charter school may receive a one-time grant from the department equal to \$500 per pupil. This funding shall be used to provide educational services (curriculum development, program development, and special education services.).

Section 5 addresses extending the allowable charter school contract time from 5 years to 10 years.

#### *Personal Services – \$101,000*

One, new FTE Education Specialist II, Range 21, position is needed to administer the charter schools application process for up to 60 schools; administer the new Charter Schools Grant Program; provide technical assistance to school district and charter school staff who are planning for or initiating a charter school; assure compliance with state charter school statutes and regulations; assure quality programs are developed and supported; develop and maintain a charter schools regulations process; and evaluate the effectiveness of Alaska's charter schools. (\$77,000)

Funds for .10 FTE of an existing Grants Administrator II position are needed to address fiscal issues, issuing grant awards and completing fiscal documents related to charter schools grant applications and billings. (\$7,000)

Funds for a .5 FTE Administrative Clerk II position are needed to provide clerical support to the Education Specialist II and for the application process. (\$17,000)

Although the Grants Administrator II and Administrative Clerk II positions are existing positions, current federal fund sources are not sufficient to fund the charter schools duties that would be assigned to them.

*Travel - (\$5,000)*

Travel funding is needed to provide for a limited number of technical assistance and/or compliance reviews of charter schools. (\$5,000)

*Contractual - (\$60,000)*

Contractual funding is needed primarily for evaluation of the effectiveness and success of charter schools in Alaska. Additionally, some funding is needed to support administrative services functions, postage, phone charges, copier charges, printing and dissemination of information about effective and successful charter schools and Charter Schools Grant Program applications. (\$60,000)

*Supplies - \$4,000*

Funding is needed for the purchase of general office supplies and materials for meetings related to charter schools. (\$4,000)

*Equipment - \$2,000*

Funding is needed for the purchase of a computer for the Education Specialist II position. (\$2,000)

*Grants - \$1,253*

Funding is needed in the grant line for the newly created Charter Schools Grant Program. This program allows for a charter school to receive a one-time grant from the department equal to \$500 per pupil. This funding shall be used to provide educational services (curriculum development, program development, and special education services).

| District   | FY'02<br>Projected<br>Charter<br>ADM's | AS<br>14.03.263(a)<br>One Time<br>Grant of \$500<br>Per Pupil |
|--|--|---|
| Anchorage Aquarian                                   | 240                                    | 120,000   |
| Anchorage Family Partnership*                        | 799                                    | 399,500   |
| Anchorage Village Charter                            | 120                                    | 60,000  |
| Craig PACE CS*                                       | 200                                    | 100,000   |
| Delta/Greely Cyber School*                           | 202                                    | 101,000   |
| Fairbanks Chinook Charter                            | 96                                     | 48,000  |
| Fairbanks New Beginnings                             | 34                                     | 17,000  |
| Iditarod Takotna Charter                             | 35                                     | 17,500  |
| Juneau Community Charter                             | 60                                     | 30,000  |
| Kenai Aurora Borealis                                | 129                                    | 64,500  |
| Kenai Homer Charter School                           | 26                                     | 13,000  |
| Ketchikan Charter School                             | 128                                    | 64,000  |
| Lower Kuskokwim Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion | 190                                    | 95,000  |
| Mat-Su Academy Charter                               | 135                                    | 67,500  |
| Mat-Su Midnight Sun                                  | 92                                     | 46,000  |
| Nome Anvil City Science Acad.                        | 20                                     | 10,000  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>2,506</b>                           | <b>1,253,000</b>  |

\* These are correspondence schools.

Adopt

22-LS0254VP.1

Ford

4/18/01

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: CSHB 101(HES)

1 Page 3, following line 23:

2 Insert a new subsection to read:

3 "(c) If the amount appropriated in a fiscal year for the charter school grant  
4 program is insufficient to meet the amounts authorized under (a) of this section, the  
5 department shall reduce pro rata each pupil's grant by the necessary percentage as  
6 determined by the department."



# Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Finance  
committee name

Committee on HB 101 Charter Schools, dated April 18, 2001  
bill # / subject

Thank you for taking this testimony.

I am the chair of the Academic Policy Committee of Aurora Borealis Charter School in Kenai.

The APC is in favor of all provisions currently in HB 101.

As you know charter schools are public schools funded by State and local monies. Unfortunately, small charter schools are discriminated against in the funding formula because their population is added to the largest school in the district when determining per pupil state support. In our case this results in the District receiving not only less money for our students, but also less funding per pupil of the high school students. It is interesting to note that there is as much as \$7,000 less per pupil for students added to a charter school vs a student added to a similarly sized regular school in Cooper Landing. To me this simply is not right. Charter school students should be funded at the same level as students similarly situated. This bill addresses the problem to some degree in that it reduces the size from 200 to 100.

We are certainly in favor of this change.

The grant for charter schools will help a great deal in procuring needed equipment or building improvements. We do not have enough space for the 200 students on our waiting list, so our plan includes building portable classrooms next year. This grant money could help in that endeavor as well as in other areas like equipment.

We are also very much in support of eliminating the sunset clause and lengthening the contract term. Charter schools have difficulty obtaining facilities and the sunset clause and the short contract term are part of the problem.

Finally we are strongly in support of the provision to require accountability for charter schools. Our goal at Aurora Borealis is to raise the bar in education. Our test scores are currently at the top of our District. Our program works, we offer a valuable alternative for parents and students and we think that charter schools will make a difference in education.

Please pass HB 101.

Signed: *L. Jensen*  
Testifier

*Aurora Borealis Charter School*  
Representing (optional)

*Kenai*  
Address

*907 283 8227*  
Phone number



P.O. Box 232821 • Anchorage, AK 99523-2821 • (907) 345-8032 • (907) 345-8034 FAX

20 Feb 2001

Alaska State Legislature  
Vic Kohring, Chair of HESS  
Alaska State Capital, Room #104  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

**SUBJECT:**

Dear Alaska State Legislature,

It is my intent that this letter supports the passage and immediate implementation of HB101 and HB89. As a parent of a student at The Academy Charter School, I am convinced that charter schools are critical to the development of education in our community. Charter schools provide diversity, relief from the intense overcrowding problems currently experienced in the Mat-Su, and even more, they provide an environment for children to develop an appreciation for learning and growing as human beings. Remarkably, The Academy Charter School requires no food service, no bus service, and has received very little support from the district in even providing sewer and water. Yet as cost effective as this has been for the district, our disappointment as we are continuously shorted in both funding and services by the school district, had been remarkable.

Legislative support in the form of a House Bill that provides more support for the charter schools would provide stability and allow for better planning. It would encourage the educators and staff of these schools to continue their efforts and pursue opportunities for our charter schools to improve educational opportunities for our children. I believe this is the goal we would all like to achieve.

I would like to voice my unequivocal support, and even gratitude, for your efforts to improve opportunities for charter schools in Alaska. I assure you that based upon my experience with That Academy Charter School, your efforts are not wasted. In fact, as I mentioned above, you could not do better than invest in this type of educational resource. The return in learning per dollar spent is simply remarkable. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

Marc H. Peterson  
Sr. Project Manager  
USARAK Hazardous Waste Management Contract  
(Parent of a charter school student)

(1) WES FYI  
(2) HB 101 File

LAW OFFICES

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February 16, 2001

Representative Fred Dyson  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 104  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Re: HB 101 (Charter Schools)

Dear Representative Dyson:

I write this letter in strong support of your HB 101, in which you propose changes to the current statutes governing charter schools. I have been associated with Aquarian Charter School (Anchorage) since its beginning four years ago, as both a parent and chair of the school's Academic Policy Committee. When the charter school laws were passed in 1995, they were a "first stab" at a new situation. We now have four years under our belts. Your proposed legislation corrects many of the shortcomings of the original law.

For the sake of brevity I will not write about each of your proposed changes, except to say that I agree with them and with the reasons provided in your accompanying Sponsor Statement. I do, however, want to comment on your proposed Section 6, which amends A.S. 14.17.905.

First, your change to A.S. 14.17.905(b)(2), in which you propose to modify the funding base to be triggered by 100 students ADM, rather than 200 students, is absolutely crucial. Whether 100, 200 or some other number, I presume we can all agree that these figures are somewhat arbitrary. By definition charter schools are most likely going to be small. What is unique and innovative at the 100 student level, however, becomes surprisingly less innovative at 200+ students. I speak from experience: at Aquarian we went from 120 students to 220 students, and I firmly believe that we lost a lot of our ability to be innovative and flexible by doubling.

Rep. Fred Dyson  
February 16, 2001  
Page 2

Also, attracting 200 students to a new and/or already underfunded school can be amazingly difficult. Walden Pond Charter School was forced to close its doors this year for exactly that reason, even though the students, parents, teachers, and the Anchorage School District were all in agreement that Walden Pond filled a much-needed niche. I do not think it's an overstatement to say that Walden Pond folded because 200 students, rather than 100, was the statutorily-imposed "magic number" required to receive full state funding (Walden Pond had approximately 130 students).

In short, something as simple as lowering the statutory number to 100 students ADM would give both existing and future charter schools a greater chance of succeeding than anyone who has not witnessed this problem firsthand might imagine. Your proposed bill is thus just right in this respect.

My second and last comment is also directed at another portion of your proposed Section 6 (subparagraph 3), but here I recommend that the Legislature not just add your proposed language regarding "correspondence school" funding, but that the Legislature also define what it means by these two words. Your proposed change to A.S. 14.17.905(b)(3) ties funding at the 100% level to a charter school "not [being] operated as a correspondence school." This in turn ties into the funding formula found at A.S. 14.17.430.

Please know, however, that these two clauses are ambiguous, and that this ambiguity has already been the subject of litigation between the DOE and Family Partnership Charter School ("FPCS"), a home school charter school in Anchorage. I know this because I was the lawyer who represented FPCS. During the litigation the DOE stated that A.S. 14.03.905(b)(3) and 14.17.430 were ambiguous, in that neither of these statutes define what constitutes a "correspondence school." The hearing officer held that although via subsequent regulations the DOE tried to define "correspondence school," the DOE was unable to do so. In a nutshell, everyone involved seemed to agree that this was a job for the Legislature.

The DOE also acknowledged that 1) a correspondence school is typically a "distance delivery" model (such as the State-run Alyeska correspondence school, where students rarely or never meet their teachers, and lessons are mailed out and then mailed back for grading), 2) FPCS was quite different, i.e., a "home school" that had direct, personal and ongoing contact with teachers, in close "partnership" with each student's parents, and (3) the Anchorage School District--which worked most closely with FPCS--did not consider FPCS to be a "correspondence school," and ASD expressly disagreed with DOE's attempt to classify FPCS as a correspondence school. But because the Legislature did not define what it meant by "correspondence school," the DOE attempted to fund FPCS at only

Rep. Fred Dyson  
February 16, 2001  
Page 3

80%. Although the DOE eventually conceded that FPCS should be funded at 100% for this year, I anticipate that to save money the DOE will at some point in the future again try to classify FPCS as a "correspondence school."

I thus urge the Legislature to eliminate this ambiguity by now defining "correspondence school." This could be done very easily, by simply adding the following underlined words to your proposed A.S. 14.03.905(b):

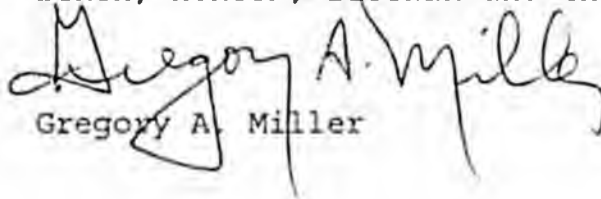
... and (3) the charter school is not operated as a distance delivery correspondence school.

While FPCS is in no way any type of a correspondence school-- "distance delivery" or otherwise--adding these two words would be the simplest way to clarify this ambiguity.

Thank you, Representative Dyson, for sponsoring this bill, and to all Representatives and Senators who ultimately support it. Please call if you have questions.

Sincerely,

BIRCH, HORTON, BITTNER and CHEROT

  
Gregory A. Miller

**Subject:** HB101

**Date:** Wed, 07 Feb 2001 15:57:38 -0900

**From:** "Lynn Aleshire" <lynn.aleshire@acsalaska.net>

**To:** Representative\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

Rep. Dyson,

I just read through your HB 101 and am very pleased with the changes you propose to charter school law. Of course, since we always want a little bit more I'd like to ask if you would consider amending it to address the new definition of a correspondence school.

As you know the State Board of Ed. recently accepted the administration's new definition of a correspondence school which targets Family Partnership Charter School and reduces its financing by 20%. This new definition presents our school with another tremendous financial hurdle. We are considering legal action since we believe that the new definition flies in the face of the legislature's original intention for correspondence schools. It would save FPCS many, many thousands of dollars in legal expenses and also would save our families more hardship if the legislature would address this issue. The money we have had to spend and will spend in our battles with DoEED would be much better spent for educating kids.

Thanks for considering this issue and for your steadfast support for better education for Alaska's kids.

Lynn Aleshire  
FPCS APC Member

**Subject: charter bill And Midnight Sun family learning Center**

**Date: Sat, 17 Feb 2001 22:48:51 EST**

**From: BrwnBare@aol.com**

**To: Representative\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us**

To whom it may concern :

I write this Email as a MOM . I am not a business owner or a professional .

But I would like to say a few things on this subject .

To Start with I have two small children enrolled in Midnight sun. I have not had to experience a " real School " Nor do I ever want to !

Without our school though , My children Would be home Schooled Which I had planned on doing to start with .

We have a school that has the most loving and caring environment , We are a true family . And No Where else ( besides My Home ) Would my kids be safe

We have a Saying around our school " We have school full of Mom's" And That in its self should be good enough to get HB 101 Passed .

Please take a look at our State of the Charter and the results of past few yrs to see how important Charter schools are !!!!! We have accomplished So much . I would also like to invite you to see our little school and how much fun learning can be .

I am very grateful that you want this bill to pass and you see how important charter Schools are .

Like I said I am just a MOM and a Parent volunteer

Thanks for all you Do for our Charter Schools

Sincerely,

Cyndi Brown

**Subject: Re: Charter School Funding**

**Date: Mon, 26 Feb 2001 19:15:11 -0900**

**From: "asmith" <asmith@ideafamilies.org>**

**To: <Representative\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>**

Representative Dyson,

I was encouraged to see that you are working on issues of importance to the charter schools in Alaska. The issues of equity in funding are significant and have not been addressed in a satisfactory manner, as yet. I look forward to seeing progress with your bill, but was extremely disappointed to see that school size was being increased from 100 student schools to 150 students for the higher funding. I wish you well in working for charter schools. The obstacles created by the current law are nearly insurmountable when issues of lease commitments and approvals by local school districts are considered.

My children attend Village Charter School. The success of the school and their ability to educate children would be greatly enhanced if it were freed from Anchorage School District control and were given equitable per student funding.

Allison Smith  
310 Highview Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99515

**Subject: H.B. 101 - HESS/Charter Schools**

**Date: Sun, 18 Feb 2001 17:49:55 -0900**

**From: "thomasalaska" <thomasalaska@gci.net>**

**To: "Representative Fred Dyson" <Representative\_Fred\_Dyson@Legis.state.AK.US>**

**CC: "Linda Sharp" <lsharp@alaska.net>**

Representative Dyson:

On behalf of our 300 Southcentral Alaska members, Lodge No. 46 of the Sons of Norway would like to express its support for House Bill 101. We have worked closely with the Village Charter School (VCS) in Anchorage to help them to get started and to grow.

On the sunset issue, the schools need several years lead time to provide for programmatic continuity: arrange for facility leases, staffing and so forth. On the funding issue, we understand that the proposed bill will narrow the present gap between the smaller schools like VCS and other schools and will benefit the students accordingly.

Can you please forward this message to HESS and all legislators? And, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me tomorrow at 561-3478 (or at 333-9101 in the evening).

Sincerely,

Howard Thomas  
President  
Bernt Balchen Lodge No. 46  
Sons of Norway

**Dallas Engineering, Inc.**  
475 Forest Hills Drive  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775

February 15, 2001

Representative Dyson  
Members of HESS (Senate / House)  
Members of the Alaska Legislature

RE: Charter Schools HB 101

Senators and Representatives:

Please consider my views when Representative Dyson's and Senator Bettye Davis' bills come forward for your vote. I am a retired petroleum engineer, having moved to Alaska in 1974 to help the University of Alaska begin its petroleum technology program, after 25 years of working as a petroleum engineer in private industry in North Dakota and the Williston Basin. I maintain a small office in Fairbanks even now, although I am 78 years old and generally travelling, writing a book and coaching math part-time in public schools in Fairbanks and Anchorage.

I hope you will pass a bill this session that changes the fate of charter schools in Alaska. The present law is crippling them. It precludes many who are interested from considering proposing a charter, and it causes extreme stress for many charter schools presently operating in Alaska. It has also caused the demise of at least one and probably more of the charters that have closed their doors.

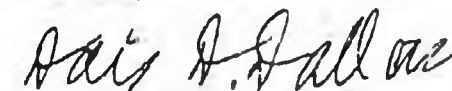
Current law is flawed in the following major ways:

**#1. Authorization.** There should be a choice of authorizing agencies. Requiring charter schools to subject themselves only to the local school districts is suicide. It could be likened to requiring the newly freed slaves in 1865 to get their freedom passports from the Plantation Owners, and to report to them for all actions they took. There must be an Independent Board, representing the population of Alaska, who for a decade have advocated for freedom and accountability in education. This is the most important change you should make.

**#2. Sunset.** The sunset clause of 2005 should be lifted and there should be no sunset, or at the earliest 2015. Contract should be for ten years, not five.

**#3. Funding.** Charter schools should be funded no lower than the average school in the area that they serve. They should be given housing without cost, in addition to the per student funding. Without equal funding they cannot compete. This would level the playing field.  
You are welcome to contact me by e-mail or by returning mail if you have any questions. I would be happy to help you get such a bill passed in 2001.

Best wishes,



Dois D. Dallas, P.E.  
475 Forest Hills Drive  
Fairbanks, AK 99775  
Email: [Doisdd@aol.com](mailto:Doisdd@aol.com)

or [dotuccfd@aol.com](mailto:dotuccfd@aol.com)

February 16, 2001

Dear Legislators,

HB 101 is a well-written bill. Please give it your full support to pass it this year. It is overdue and will be a welcome step of relief in the right direction.

There are three major concerns with the current legislation: funding for many "city" charters is half and in some cases, less, than other "city" schools that you fund. This is because in part the description written into school funding formulas, which you can correct. It is also because "city" schools get local taxes, and in Anchorage, none of that is passed on to the charters. Most importantly, "city" and "rural" schools get facilities, in many cases worth millions of dollars.

I am with the Village Charter School, having participated since its design and currently serving as a K-3 teacher and APC (governing committee) member. We receive approximately \$3,850 per child, and from that, pay space / facility. We have a terrible time working with a landlord with that budget and limp from year to year. Our fear now is that the economy is getting better, which means our landlord can find much more attractive tenants than us.

The sunset should be lifted and the length of a contract 10 years with 5 year renewable so that landlord negotiations are improved.

Lastly, we struggle almost daily with school district oversight challenges. I have spoken with School Board Members and ASD executives. but it is as much that we can't fit their "round holes" because we are a tiny, square peg. An Independent Board, such as Arizona has, would be idea. Please take the time to visit their Independent Board's office and a dozen of their charters if you get the chance. I visited 30 of their schools and believe that model is the best in the US.

Best wishes, and I'll help you however I can.

Linda Sharp  
2710 West 34 Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99517  
Tel. 245-5501  
Email: lsharp@alaska.net



# FPCS Parent Teacher Student Organization

3339 Fairbanks Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-4145  
(907) 274-3105

February 18, 2001

Representative Fred Dyson and HESS Committee members  
Alaska State Capital, Room #104  
Suite 140  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

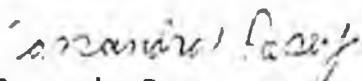
Dear Representative Dyson,

The members of our organization appreciate your sponsorship of HB 101. We believe that charter schools provide parents, teachers, and community members with positive options in public school education. We strongly support legislation that strengthens the autonomous nature of charter schools, provides a foundation for charter school longevity, and ensures equal state funding for all public school students. HB 101 provides a venue for charter school longevity and takes steps to provide equitable funding.

The Family Partnership Charter School (FPCS) is a unique school which innovatively pursues the reality of public education. When directed toward charter schools in a generalized fashion, the ensconced language of public education can fall short of addressing the issues relevant to FPCS. It is our hope that the language of charter school legislation can develop a dialect which is inclusive of unique educational programs. We respectfully ask that you consider these suggested changes to amendment AS 14.17.905 (section 6 of HB 101): the revision of part one to read "(1) the school is not dependent upon the facility of another separate school"; and the addition of one word to part three "(3) the charter school is not operated exclusively as a correspondence school".

We deeply appreciate your dedication to all public school students in Alaska. Thank you for making charter schools one of your priorities. Please contact us if we can help in any way.

Sincerely,

  
Cassandra Posey  
PTSO President

WES FYI  
HB 101

## **AURORA BOREALIS CHARTER SCHOOL**

11247 Frontage Road Ste. A  
Kenai, Alaska 99611  
(907) 283-0292

February 22, 2001

To: Rep. Fred Dyson, Chair and members of the House HESS Committee

Subject: Support of HB 101 regarding Charter Schools.

The Academic Policy Committee of the Aurora Borealis Charter School is in support of HB 101. We particularly urge the passage of the provisions in the bill to eliminate the sunset clause and to extend the term of contracts to 10 years.

Aurora Borealis Charter School is providing a valuable alternative to regular public schools. Our enrollment has increased annually, our students have achieved benchmark test results that are among the highest in the District and parents are happy with our school. We have a waiting list of 200 students, which is twice our current enrollment.

Removing the sunset date and extending the contract term will be advantageous to all charter schools especially in attracting and retaining qualified teachers. Longer contract terms will help charter schools that are having difficulty securing facilities.

Additional funding for charter schools would be advantageous especially since the current law does not give specific direction to school districts on how to fund charter schools. We are also very much in favor of the provision which establishes alternative schools as separate schools for funding purposes. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District apparently is penalized with lower funding because our enrollment is added to the largest school in the District. This inequity in the funding formula needs to be corrected.

Thank you for your work on this bill. Passage of HB 101 will be beneficial to charter schools, which we believe will lead to higher quality outcomes throughout the public education system.

Sincerely,



Larry Semmens, APC Chair  
Aurora Borealis Charter School

**Subject: H.B. 101 - HESS/Charter Schools**

**Date: Sun, 18 Feb 2001 17:49:55 -0900**

**From: "thomasalaska" <thomasalaska@pci.net>**

**To: "Representative Fred Dyson" <Representative\_Fred\_Dyson@Legis.state.AK.US>**

**CC: "Linda Sharp" <lsharp@alaska.net>**

Representative Dyson:

On behalf of our 300 Southcentral Alaska members, Lodge No. 46 of the Sons of Norway would like to express its support for House Bill 101. We have worked closely with the Village Charter School (VCS) in Anchorage to help them to get started and to grow.

On the sunset issue, the schools need several years lead time to provide for programmatic continuity: arrange for facility leases, staffing and so forth. On the funding issue, we understand that the proposed bill will narrow the present gap between the smaller schools like VCS and other schools and will benefit the students accordingly.

Can you please forward this message to HESS and all legislators? And, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me tomorrow at 561-3478 (or at 333-9101 in the evening).

Sincerely,

Howard Thomas  
President  
Bernt Balchen Lodge No. 46  
Sons of Norway

WES RYD  
HB 101 file

Pat Shelton  
124 East 10th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

February 20, 2001

Representative Fred Dyson and the Health, Education, and Social Services Committee members  
Alaska State Capital, Room #104  
Suite 140  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Dyson,

Thank you for sponsoring HB 101. Charter schools diversify public school education through the pro-active involvement of parents, teachers, and community members. Because charter schools were created politically they must be maintained politically. This bill takes some much needed steps to strengthen Alaska's charter school legislation.

When compared with other states Alaska is rated as having one of the weakest charter school laws in the nation. The strength of a state's charter school legislation is measured by its ability to provide a secure foundation for greater autonomy in exchange for higher academic and fiscal accountability. Measures of the stability of this foundation are:

- a. the number of years a charter may be contracted,
- b. the number of charter granting agencies,
- c. the amount of autonomy a charter school realizes in its operation (the ability to hire outside of a local district's pool of potential employees, freedom to choose curriculum and set educational priorities, direct access to the funding generated by student enrollment, the ability to set its own schedule in respect to daily operations and testing, and the ability to exercise self governance),
- d. access to equitable funding when compared with other public schools in its area,
- e. the ability to budget and manage funds independent of charter granting agency,
- f. timely and appropriate audits to ensure fiscal accountability,
- g. independent legal status granted by legislation,
- h. an appeal process for charter school applicants which have been denied by a charter granting agency,
- i. access to start up funds,
- j. safeguards to eliminate discrimination, and
- k. the charter functions as a performance-based contract.

Charter schools developed from a simple yet profound concept, "...sound school choices can be

**SUPPORT**

provided to families under the umbrella of public education without micromanagement by government bureaucracies" (Vanourek et al., 1997, p. 1). This idea holds parents and teachers directly responsible for the student's education and is intended to empower these individuals by providing a vehicle with which their vested goals can be realized. Alaska's charter schools can only develop their full potential if they are provided maximum autonomy through legislation. HB 101 provides a venue for charter school longevity and takes steps to provide equitable funding. Is it possible that this legislation can provide any other missing elements necessary for a sound charter school foundation?

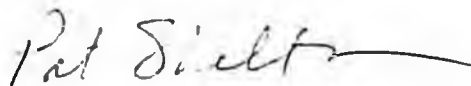
If further development of the charter school legislation is unreasonable at this time please consider the following changes to AS 14.17.905 (section 6 of HB 101) in lieu of any additional amendments:

1. the revision of part one to read "(1) the school is **not dependent upon the facility of another separate school**"; and
2. the addition of one word to part three "(3) the charter school is not operated **exclusively** as a correspondence school".

These changes will effectively address some of the issues charter schools confront. Facility is often, if not always, a major hurdle for charter schools as they do not receive funding for facilities unless such funds can be generated through outside sources. The definition of a correspondence school is ambiguous by today's educational practices. The distinctions between a correspondence school and a non correspondence school become blurred as more schools utilize the internet and other technological tools.

Your consideration of these suggestions and your dedication to all public school students in Alaska are greatly appreciated. Thank you for making the development of charter schools a priority during this legislative session.

Sincerely,



Pat Shelton



*Making Schools Work Better for All Children*

# CER SCORE CARD

## Charter School Legislation: State Rankings

### States With Strong Charter Laws...

... which do are are likely to support at least some significant development of autonomous charter schools.

| CHARTER SCHOOL LEGISLATION: STATE RANKINGS                      |              |             |           |           |             |             |              |           |           |             |             |              |             |             |           |            |
|---|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Grade   | A            |             |           |           |             |             |              |           |           | B           |             |              |             |             |           |            |
| State   | AZ           | MI          | MN        | DC        | DE          | MA          | TX           | CA        | FL        | NY          | NC          | PA           | CO          | MO          | SC        | OR         |
| Year Law Passed   | '94          | '93         | '91       | '96       | '95         | '93         | '95          | '92       | '96       | '98         | '96         | '97          | '93         | '98         | '96       | '9         |
| Number of schools allowed                                       | 4.5          | 4.3         | 5         | 4.5       | 3.7         | 3.3         | 4            | 5         | 3.5       | 2.3         | 3.5         | 5            | 4.5         | 2.3         | 4.5       | 3.2        |
| Multiple chartering authorities                                 | 4.5          | 5           | 4.5       | 4         | 2.4         | 3.3         | 3.25         | 4.5       | 3.5       | 3.3         | 3.5         | 3.25         | 3           | 4           | 1.5       | 2          |
| Eligible charter applicants                                     | 5            | 4.7         | 5         | 5         | 4.4         | 4.3         | 4.25         | 5         | 5         | 4           | 4.5         | 4.5          | 4           | 1           | 3.5       | 4.         |
| New starts allowed  | 4.5          | 4.7         | 4.5       | 5         | 4.9         | 5           | 4.75         | 4         | 4         | 5           | 4.5         | 4.5          | 3.25        | 4.6         | 3.5       | 4          |
| School may be started without evidence of local support         | 5            | 5           | 3.5       | 3         | 3.5         | 4           | 3.5          | 3         | 3         | 4           | 3           | 3.5          | 3           | 4           | 2         | 5          |
| Automatic waiver from state and district laws                   | 4.5          | 2.7         | 5         | 5         | 4.4         | 3           | 5            | 3         | 3         | 5           | 4           | 3            | 3.25        | 4           | 4.5       | 3.         |
| Legal/operational autonomy                                      | 5            | 5           | 4.5       | 4.5       | 5           | 4.7         | 4            | 3         | 3.5       | 5           | 3           | 3            | 2.75        | 4.2         | 3.5       | 3.         |
| Guaranteed full per-pupil funding                               | 3.5          | 5           | 3.5       | 4.5       | 5           | 5           | 4            | 4.5       | 5         | 2.6         | 4.5         | 2.5          | 3.75        | 4           | 5         | 3.2        |
| Fiscal Autonomy   | 5            | 5           | 5         | 4.5       | 5           | 5           | 4            | 4         | 5         | 5           | 4           | 3.5          | 4.5         | 4           | 4.5       | 2.         |
| Exempt from collective bargaining agreement/district work rules | 4.75         | 4           | 4.5       | 5         | 4.9         | 4.3         | 4            | 4         | 4.5       | 3.3         | 3           | 4            | 4.5         | 4           | 3.5       | 4.2        |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>46.25</b> | <b>45.4</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>43.2</b> | <b>41.9</b> | <b>40.75</b> | <b>40</b> | <b>40</b> | <b>39.5</b> | <b>37.5</b> | <b>36.75</b> | <b>36.5</b> | <b>36.1</b> | <b>36</b> | <b>35.</b> |
| RANK 2000   | 1            | 2           | 3         | 4         | 5           | 6           | 7            | 8         | 9         | 10          | 11          | 12           | 13          | 14          | 15        | 16         |
| Rank 1998   | 1            | 2           | 6         | 3         | 4           | 5           | 9            | 10        | 13        | 7           | 8           | 16           | 12          | 15          | 11        | N.         |
| Number of charters Spring 2000                                  | 352          | 173         | 59        | 31        | 5           | 39          | 167          | 239       | 111       | 5           | 75          | 47           | 65          | 18          | 8         | 4          |

## States With Weak Charter Laws...

... which have not, and are unlikely to lead to significant charter activity.

| CHARTER SCHOOL LEGISLATION: STATE RANKINGS                      |     |      |      |     |      |      |      |     |      |      |       |     |     |      |      |      |
|---|-----|------|------|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|------|-------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| Grade   | C   |      |      |     |      |      |      |     |      |      | D     |     |     |      |      |      |
| State   | IL  | NH   | OH   | GA  | LA   | ID   | NY   | CT  | UT   | AK   | NM    | HI  | WY  | RI   | AR   | VA   |
| Year Law Passed   | '96 | '95  | '97  | '93 | '95  | '98  | '97  | '96 | '98  | '95  | '93   | '94 | '95 | '95  | '95  | '98  |
| Number of schools allowed                                       | 2   | 1.7  | 1.7  | 5   | 2    | 2.6  | 2.5  | 2.5 | 0.6  | 2.3  | 2.5   | 1   | 5   | 1    | 2.5  | 1.6  |
| Multiple chartering authorities                                 | 1   | 0.7  | 2.7  | 1   | 2.5  | 1.3  | 1    | 2.5 | 2    | 0.3  | 2.25  | 1   | 0   | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| Eligible charter applicants                                     | 4   | 3.7  | 3    | 4   | 3.5  | 3    | 2    | 1.5 | 4.3  | 4.7  | 2     | 1.5 | 4.3 | 2.5  | 2.5  | 2.6  |
| New starts allowed  | 3.5 | 3.7  | 2.7  | 4   | 4    | 4.8  | 4.5  | 3.5 | 4.1  | 5    | 3.5   | 3   | 4   | 4    | 3.5  | 2.3  |
| School may be started without evidence of local support         | 1   | 0    | 4.7  | 2.5 | 2    | 1    | 5    | 1   | 2.5  | 1.3  | 3     | 2   | 1.7 | 0    | 2.5  | 2.6  |
| Automatic waiver from state and district laws                   | 3   | 4.7  | 3    | 5   | 2.5  | 4.3  | 2.5  | 2.5 | 0.6  | 0    | 0.5   | 4.5 | 0   | 0.5  | 0    | 0.6  |
| Legal/operational autonomy                                      | 3   | 3.7  | 1.7  | 0   | 1    | 0    | 1.5  | 0.5 | 1.6  | 0    | 0     | 0.5 | 0   | 0.5  | 0    | 0.6  |
| Guaranteed full per-pupil funding                               | 3   | 0    | 2.7  | 2   | 3    | 3    | 3.5  | 3.5 | 0.3  | 3.3  | 3     | 1.5 | 0   | 3.5  | 1.5  | 0.6  |
| Fiscal Autonomy   | 3.5 | 5    | 2.7  | 2   | 4.5  | 1.6  | 1    | 3   | 1.3  | 4    | 2     | 1   | 0   | 1.5  | 0    | 0    |
| Exempt from collective bargaining agreement/district work rules | 4   | 4.7  | 2.3  | 1.5 | 1.5  | 4    | 2    | 2.5 | 4.3  | 0    | 0     | 0   | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Total   | 28  | 27.9 | 27.2 | 27  | 26.5 | 25.6 | 25.5 | 23  | 21.6 | 20.9 | 18.75 | 16  | 15  | 14.5 | 13.5 | 11.9 |
| RANK 2000   | 20  | 21   | 22   | 23  | 24   | 25   | 26   | 27  | 28   | 29   | 30    | 31  | 32  | 33   | 34   | 35   |
| Rank 1998   | 20  | 19   | 23   | 21  | 14   | 24   | 27   | 22  | 25   | 26   | 33    | 32  | 29  | 28   | 34   | 30   |
| Number of charters Spring 2000                                  | 19  | 0    | 48   | 32  | 17   | 8    | 5    | 16  | 3    | 17   | 3     | 2   | 0   | 2    | 0    | 0    |

### About the Grades:

- **"A"** (Score between 40-50): These laws allow for a significant number of charter schools and contribute positively to their growth and development.
- **"B"** (Score between 30-39): These laws also allow for healthy growth of charter schools but contain some significant provisions that may impede growth.
- **"C"** (Score between 20-29): These laws may allow for a good number of schools, but still pose significant challenges to sustaining a prolific and healthy charter environment.
- **"D"** (Score between 10-19): These laws largely allow conventional education bureaucracies to regulate the establishment and operation of charter schools. While schools have opened under these laws, they are heavily regulated and are few and far between.
- **"F"** (Score between 0-9): These laws simply offer no real charter environment at all, and are charter laws in name only.

### Rating Criteria

All 37 charter school laws in existence as of April 2000 are scored and ranked according to

their degree of expansiveness. The states are ranked from 1 (most expansive) to 37 (most restrictive), as well as divided into Strong and Weak Charter Law States, indicating which do or are likely to support at least some significant development of autonomous charter schools, and which do not.

- **Number of Schools:** States that permit an unlimited or substantial number of autonomous charter schools encourage more activity than states that either limit the number of autonomous schools, or allow an unlimited number of charter schools with restrictions on their autonomy, demographics, etc.
- **Multiple chartering authorities/binding appeals process:** States that permit a number of entities in addition to or instead of local school boards to authorize charter schools, or that provide applicants with a binding appeals process, encourage more activity than those that vest authorizing power in a single entity, particularly if that entity is the local school board, or provide only an advisory appeals process
- **Variety of applicants:** States that permit a variety of individuals and groups both inside and outside the existing public school system to start charter schools encourage more activity than states that limit eligible applicants to public schools or public school personnel.
- **New starts:** States that permit new schools to start up encourage more activity than those that permit only public school conversions.
- **Formal evidence of local support:** States that permit charter schools to be formed without having to prove specified levels of local support encourage more activity than states that require such demonstrations of support.
- **Automatic waiver from laws and regulations:** States that provide automatic blanket waivers from most or all state and district education laws, regulations, and policies encourage more activity than states that provide no waivers or require charter schools to negotiate waivers on an issue-by-issue basis with charter-granting authorities. (In no case, however, are civil rights laws or health/safety codes waived for charter schools)
- **Legal/operational autonomy:** States in which charter schools are independent legal entities that can own property, sue and be sued, incur debt, control budget and personnel, and contract for services encourage more activity than states in which charter schools remain under district jurisdiction. In addition, legal autonomy refers to the ability of charter schools to control enrollment numbers, with no special conditions imposed by the charter law or the local district on its policies.
- **Guaranteed full funding:** States where 100% of per-pupil funding automatically follows student enrolled in charter schools encourage more activity than states where the amount of funding is automatically set below 100%, or must be negotiated with the district. (For more on charter funding, see also: [Charter School Funding Path.](#))
- **Fiscal Autonomy:** States that give charter schools full control over their own budgets, without the district holding the funds, encourage more activity than states that do not. (For more on charter funding, see also: [Charter School Funding Path.](#))
- **Exemption from collective bargaining agreements / district work rules:** Weak laws do not give charter schools control over personnel decisions but make them subject to district collective bargaining agreements or work rules.

### Other Notes:

The scores on this table are based on the current status of each law (through April 2000). Amendments to the original law, state board regulations, legal rulings, department of education interpretation and actual implementation have all been factored into the ranking. Each state is ranked for each criterion on a scale of 0 to 5, based on how that state's provisions under that

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District  
Homer Charter School  
Academic Policy Committee  
P.O. Box 474 Homer, AK 99603 (907) 235-9728

February 20, 2001

Re: HB 101 Charter School Bill

The Academic Policy Committee, APC supports HB 101, except for the following considerations.

The Homer Charter School is in its fourth year of operation.

The APC feels the cap on Charter Schools should be kept to 30 until financial concerns of existing schools are addressed properly. The Federal grants for 'planning and implementation' have been adequate for getting the programs off and running. What is lacking is the operating revenue to keep up with rising salary costs. The State of Alaska should recognize each Charter School as a separate school, no matter what size. Funding needs to be allocated to School District's according to the State's formula for each Charter School no matter what size.

**Do not increase the number of Charter Schools until each is funded as a separate school.**

Garry Belley Academic Policy Member



## The difference that choice makes

When American parents exercise choice in education, interesting things happen: public schools work better, demand for private schools subsides, good teachers do well and bad ones don't

**T**HE prospects for school vouchers in America, to create a kind of market in publicly funded education, look bleak. President Bush had said he was keen on the idea, but the education plan he proposed this week fails to take the idea very far, and what little it proposes on vouchers seems certain to be dropped in the end (see page 25). This is a shame—or so, at any rate, some fascinating new work on the effects of school choice suggests.

Caroline Hoxby of Harvard University has been working on different aspects of this issue for some time. Ms Hoxby's work inspires a kind of awe among many economists: for its clarity, its empirical thoroughness, and its wonderful ingenuity in finding ways to answer hard questions. Even if school choice were an issue that did not matter, her work would be justly admired. And it so happens that school choice is something that matters a lot.

In theory, Ms Hoxby says in her most recent published work\*, the effect of parental choice on school-system performance is uncertain. On one hand, choice, leading to competition among schools, should encourage productivity, just as it does in other markets. On the other, schools may sort themselves in such a way that "good peers are not in contact with those who would benefit from them, most", leaving the system as a whole worse off. That may be true; whether it would be a legitimate reason to deny choice seems doubtful—"you must stay in this bad school because you are helping other pupils" is not a liberal doctrine. Still, this plainly does have a bearing on the assessment of effects. Given the countervailing influences, whether choice improves education is an open, empirical question.

In answering it, Ms Hoxby begins by noting that (a) various kinds of school choice already exist across the United States and (b) one of these is especially susceptible to econometric investigation. Some cities have lots of school districts; some do not. In the first group, parents have greater effective choice than in the second: they can exercise it by moving more readily out of one district and into another, a process of choosing with you:

### ECONOMICS FOCUS

feet that economists call "Tiebout choice".

This, it turns out, is an econometrically promising idea. Often, policy on other kinds of school choice (as when, say, a district decides to let parents choose among schools within its area) is influenced by school performance. When that happens, cause and effect get muddled up: it is hard to know how much choice is affecting performance, and how much vice versa. But Ms Hoxby suspects, and confirms, that the number of districts in any area depends heavily on historical circumstances. In this case, causation runs mainly from choice to performance. (And to the extent that this is not so, she takes ingenious steps to allow for the fact and neutralise it.) The upshot is that Tiebout choice can be explored with confidence for its effects, one way or the other, on school performance.

### Competition works

What then are the findings? Mainly, that choice improves performance. Achievement, measured by test scores and students' future earnings, is higher when there is more choice among districts. To see the scale, compare a city like Miami (at one extreme, with just one district covering almost all the metropolitan area) and Boston (at the other, with 70 districts within a 30-minute commute of downtown); that big an increase in choice is associated with an improvement in attainment of 1.4 grades and an increase in young adult earnings of 15%. And remember that choice in this form is presumably a milder stimulus than would be choice in the form of, say, an ade-

quately funded voucher scheme.

Four other results stand out. First, choice reduces spending on education—the improvement in performance is achieved at lower cost. Second, it has the biggest effects on school productivity in states where districts have greater financial independence. Third, it reduces demand for private education: "policies that reduce choice among districts (district consolidation) or the benefits of choice (more state control of spending) are likely to increase the share of students in private schools and reduce the share of voters who are interested in the general well-being of public education." Fourth, the effects barely differ as between prosperous families and poor families (or white families and black families). The view that greater choice favours the rich at the expense of the poor gets no backing. Everybody gains.

Except bad teachers. In another paper†, Ms Hoxby provides an interesting footnote on the implications of greater choice for teachers—whose unions are, of course, trenchantly opposed to most ways of increasing competition among schools. Greater choice (measured more broadly now: the econometric issues are different) is found to increase the demand for teachers who are better qualified, or went to better colleges, or have good maths and science skills, or are willing to work longer hours than their contracts require. Note that schools which operate under greater choice do not necessarily pay their teachers more (charter schools, for instance, pay less than average), but what they pay varies more with teacher quality. Such schools retain well-qualified teachers for longer than do schools facing less choice.

Choice appears to have much in its favour. Everything, maybe, except to the lower orders of the teaching profession and the massed ranks of elected politicians.



\* "Does Competition Among Public Schools Benefit Students and Taxpayers?" *American Economic Review*, December 2001. † "Would School Choice Change the Teaching Profession?" *Journal of Labor Economics*, Working Paper 2004 (<http://papers.berkeley.edu/papers/040404>).

criterion support or restrict the development of a significant number of autonomous charter schools (strongly support = 5; strongly restrict = 0), or , in the case of recently passed or amended laws, are likely to do so. States are listed from left to right from stronger to weaker. The laws are also divided into two subsets: strong or moderately effective laws which do or are likely to support at least some significant development of autonomous charter schools, and weak or ineffective laws which have not, and are unlikely to lead to significant charter activity. See the following page for a more detailed explanation of the criteria and rating system. See also analysis of individual states' laws for further explanation of specific provisions.

Each law was scored by a panel of charter school experts: [Jeanne Allen](#), President, The Center for Education Reform; Bruno Manno, Senior Fellow with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Adjunct Fellow with the Hudson Institute. Linda Brown, Director, Pioneer Institute Charter School Resource Center; Chester Finn, President of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation; and John M. Olin Fellow at the Hudson Institute, assisted with the 1997 and 1998 rankings. The average of the panelists score's were sued for the final score for each criterion, and their sum provides the final scores that determined ranking. States with tie scores were ranked according to secondary factors influencing the effectiveness of their law. Edited by [Jeanne Allen](#) and Dave DeSchryver.

Originally published by the [Center for Education Reform](#), April 2000.  
Technical corrections made February 2001.

[Print Version of Chart](#) (.rtf format -- use this version if you want to print out the chart.)

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## Overview and Background of Rankings

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HB 101 Sectional Analysis

Revised: March 6, 2001 LS0254\p

Section 1: Doubles the allowable number of charter schools in Alaska from 30 to 60. This section also eliminates the geographic distribution requirement.

Section 2: Specifies that charter schools are subject to Benchmark and High School Qualifying Exam requirements.

Section 3: Specifies what must be included in a charter school contract. The changes HB 101 makes to existing law are grammatical except for one that conforms with the contract duration change that is made in Section 5.

Section 4: Allows charter schools to use safe public buildings with approval of District Superintendent.

Section 5: Adds a new section of law that allows for a one-time charter school grant in the amount of \$500 per student.

Section 6: Changes the allowable charter school contract length from a maximum of 5 years to a maximum of 10 years.

Section 7: Specifies that a charter school needs at least 150 students to be counted as a separate school for purposes of foundation formula calculations. (Existing law states that alternative schools need at least 200 students.

Section 8: Repeals the July, 2005 charter school law sunset date.

Section 9: Sets an effective date.