

# Educating Young Alaskans

*The Republican-led Majority takes very seriously its responsibility to provide Alaska's young people with excellent educational opportunities, and made increasing education funding its highest priority. The Majority passed legislation making across-the-board increases in education funding, continuing its expanding investment in the University of Alaska, ensuring high school diplomas are meaningful to graduates and employers alike, creating incentives for new and veteran educators to help fill the teacher shortage, and encouraging more state autonomy in spending federal funds.*

## **House Bill 90:** Municipal School Bond Reimbursement

Sponsored by Rep. Eldon Mulder

House Bill 90 correct a technical error in a major school capital funding and bond debt reimbursement measure passed by the Legislature in 2000. The correction allows the state to provide nearly \$78 million to reimburse the Municipality of Anchorage and the Northwest Arctic Borough a portion of the cost of school construction or repair bonds that had already been approved by voters.

## **House Bill 99:** School Discipline and Safety

Sponsored by Rep. Lesil McGuire

House Bill 99 requires public school safety and discipline plans to include policies to teach students non-violent conflict resolution and mediation practices. It seeks to recognize and reinforce civilized behavioral standards by preparing students with strategies other than violence for resolving differences.

## **House Bill 101:** Charter Schools

Sponsored by Rep. Fred Dyson

House Bill 101 eliminates the current charter school law's 2005 sunset date, which along with the required five-year term of charters had barred new schools from starting. It also extends the allowable length of a charter school contract from 5 years to 10; doubles the allowable number of statewide charter schools to 60; clarifies that charter school students are not exempt from competency testing; and provides new charter schools a one-time start-up grant of \$500 per student.

## **House Bill 120:** Disclosure of Criminal History Records

Sponsored by Rep. John Coghill, Jr.

House Bill 120 allows Alaska to join with other states in sharing the criminal history records it possesses for non-crime fighting purposes, such as helping evaluate the backgrounds of those applying to teach in public schools. It grants Alaska access to more than 55 million criminal records across the country.

## **House Bill 234:** Bonds to Fund Public Facilities

Sponsored by the House Finance Committee

House Bill 234 authorizes the state to issue bonds secured by the anticipated future revenue stream from a national tobacco liability settlement, and use the funds to pay for construction and maintenance of public schools, purchase real estate for the university of Alaska-Anchorage, and provide for improvements in harbors and port facilities.

## **Senate Bill 86:** Teacher Employment and Subject Expertise

Sponsored by Sen. Pete Kelly

Senate Bill 86 allows people with a bachelor's degree to teach in the subject matter of their degree. It would also allow those with a bachelor's degree and five years work experience to teach in the subject matter of their experience.

**Senate Bill 133:** Public School Exit Exam

Sponsored by the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee

Senate Bill 133 maintains the intent of the state high school competency exam while fine-tuning the program to better meet the needs of Alaska's students. Under SB 133, the exam would continue to be administered and the emphasis on standards and accountability remain in place for school districts, schools, teachers, parents and students. In 2004, students would be required to pass a revised exam that focuses on essential skills to graduate, and students with disabilities and transfer students would have options to help them earn a diploma if they are not able to pass the standard exam.

**Senate Bill 137:** Alaska Human Resources Investment Council

Sponsored by Sen. John Torgerson

Senate Bill 137 extends allocations to several vocational education facilities around the state for program development and improvement.

**Senate Bill 149:** Teacher/Health Care Provider Incentives

Sponsored by Sen. Loren Leman

Senate Bill 149 promotes the recruitment and retention of teachers through recognizing out-of-state teacher credentials, providing incentives for districts to employ retired teachers and improving teachers' medical coverage.

**Senate Bill 174:** Education Funding

Sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bill 174 increases the per pupil base allocation of the education foundation formula program by \$70, to \$4010, and allows more school districts to claim individual schools, increasing the per-school funding these districts receive.

**Senate Joint Resolution 5:** NCAA Basketball Preseason Tournaments

Sponsored by Sen. Loren Leman

Senate Joint Resolution 5 urges the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to preserve preseason basketball tournaments, including the Great Alaska Shootout.

**Senate Joint Resolution 6:** Education Block Grants

Sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee

Senate Joint Resolution 6 encourages Congress to provide federal education funds as block grants to states including Alaska. This would allow states to exercise their own discretion when determining where best to spend these federal education dollars.