

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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School Violence Legislation Becomes Law

(ANCHORAGE) -- A bill sponsored by Rep. Lesil McGuire (R-Anchorage) that will help make Alaska high schools safer places for students and staff alike became law with the stroke of a pen on Monday.

House Bill 99, which McGuire introduced to require state high school safety plans to include policies on using non-violent conflict resolution methods, is one of several bills the governor signed into law in Juneau yesterday.

“School safety is an issue I care very deeply about, and this session I worked very hard with school officials and members of my community to develop tools to address school violence,” McGuire said. “We approached this problem from a positive perspective, and developed some tools that have the potential for bringing significant improvements in this area.”

In addition to getting HB 99 passed by the Legislature and signed into law, McGuire also secured \$100,000 in capital funds to finance a two-year, pilot conflict resolution program for Dimond and Service high schools in South Anchorage.

Principals from both schools say they will share ideas and work together to design a program that will effectively address the growing problem of violence in Alaska schools, said McGuire. The pilot program will reach out beyond the education system to embrace input from the community, parents and students. It’s goal is to teach students there is an alternative to violence and that South Anchorage can become the model for other schools across the state.

“House Bill 99 creates the vehicle to establish policies to handle conflicts between students before they become violent,” McGuire said. “As this bill becomes the law of the land, and as we work to develop this pilot program, I look forward to giving Alaska students from Ketchikan to Barrow the security and peace of mind they need to devote all their energy to getting the best education possible, in the safest environment we can provide.”

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