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CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 197()

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES LEDOUX, Thompson, Reinbold, Peggy Wilson

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act requiring the establishment of a reading program in school districts for grades**
2 **kindergarten through three; providing for student retention in grade three; and**
3 **providing for a report on the reading program and on student retention."**

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
6 to read:

7 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the Learn to Read - Read to Learn Act.

8 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.120 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

9 (h) To the extent allowable under state and federal privacy laws, each school
10 district shall annually publish on the Internet and report to the board information from
11 the previous school year regarding

12 (1) overall student progress under each aspect of the program
13 established under AS 14.30.760;

14 (2) school board policies and procedures on student retention and

1 promotion;

2 (3) the number and percentage of students retained in grades three
3 through 10, by grade level;

4 (4) the total number and percentage of students promoted for good
5 cause, by each category, under AS 14.30.760(d);

6 (5) revisions, if any, to school board policies on student retention and
7 promotion from the previous school year.

8 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding new sections to read:

9 **Article 14. District Reading Program.**

10 **Sec. 14.30.760. District reading program.** (a) In addition to other state and
11 local programs established to address significant reading deficiencies of students, each
12 school district shall establish a reading program for students in grades kindergarten
13 through three consistent with this section.

14 (b) A district reading program shall provide for

15 (1) assessments of students within the first 30 days of the school year,
16 including valid and reliable screening and diagnostic assessments to identify
17 significant reading deficiencies;

18 (2) participation in statewide assessments;

19 (3) elimination of social promotion of students to the next grade level
20 based on age or other nonacademic factors; in this paragraph, "social promotion"
21 means the practice of promoting a student to the next grade level despite the inability
22 of the student to meet standards established for that grade level by the department;

23 (4) retention of students in grade three who fail to meet the minimum
24 reading standards established by the department on mandatory statewide assessments,
25 except for good cause as provided under (d) of this section; however, a district may
26 not retain a student in grade three for more than one school year under the program;

27 (5) to the extent feasible, an optional transitional grade for a student
28 retained in grade three under the program that combines intensive reading instruction
29 as described in (c)(1) of this section with grade four core subjects;

30 (6) as early as possible, regular written notifications of a parent or
31 guardian of a student in grades kindergarten through three who is identified as having

1 a significant reading deficiency describing

2 (A) the nature of the reading deficiency;

3 (B) the current educational services provided to the student;

4 (C) supplemental instructional services and remedial support of
5 the reading deficiency proposed to be provided to the student;

6 (D) the requirement to retain the student in grade three if the
7 reading deficiency is not sufficiently remediated, except for good cause as
8 provided in (d) of this section;

9 (E) strategies for the parent or guardian to use to help the child
10 succeed that include provision for

11 (i) supplemental tutoring using research-based reading
12 strategies;

13 (ii) a home reading plan in the context of a parent or
14 guardian contract that includes participation in parent training
15 workshops and regular parent-guided reading at home;

16 (iii) an assigned mentor in reading;

17 (7) a monitoring plan established for each student who is identified as
18 having a significant reading deficiency.

19 (c) For a student who is retained in grade three under the program established
20 in this section, a school district shall provide

21 (1) intensive interventions, during regular school hours, in reading
22 literacy designed to ameliorate the student's specific reading deficiency, including

23 (A) instructional strategies that are research-based and
24 employed daily for at least 90 minutes each day; the strategies must include

25 (i) small group instruction;

26 (ii) reduced pupil-teacher ratios;

27 (iii) frequent monitoring for progress;

28 (iv) tutoring and mentoring;

29 (v) opportunities in reading that incorporate grade four
30 core subjects to the extent feasible;

31 (vi) intensive language and vocabulary instruction that

may involve a speech and language therapist;

(B) participation by the student in a summer reading camp in the district;

(C) appropriate teaching methodologies necessary to assist the student in progressing to the next grade level in reading; the methodologies under this paragraph shall be selected by a highly effective teacher in the district, as determined by the superintendent based on teacher evaluations;

(D) extended school days, weeks, or years;

(2) review of the student's progress in completing a monitoring plan established for the student;

(3) assessment of the student's needs for additional services;

(4) instruction in developing a reading portfolio;

(5) an accelerated reading class for retained students with the lowest scores on standards-based assessments in reading; the accelerated reading class shall be designed to help each student achieve an improvement of at least two grade levels in reading;

(6) annual progress reports submitted to the department;

(7) a home reading plan that involves the student's parent or guardian.

(d) A school district may exempt a student from mandatory retention under (b)(4) of this section for good cause if the parent or guardian of the student requests the exemption, receives a recommendation from the student's teacher and principal, and provides documentation that demonstrates that the student

(1) has limited English proficiency after completing not more than two years of instruction in a limited English proficiency program;

(2) has a disability and an individual education plan under AS 14.30.278 that exempts the student from participation in statewide standards-based assessments and meets other requirements established by law;

(3) has an individualized education program under AS 14.30.278 that resulted in at least two years of intensive remediation in reading, was retained at least once in grades kindergarten through three, and is promoted using additional resources that include specialized diagnostic information, altered instructional days, and

1 individualized reading strategies;

2 (4) has received intensive remediation in reading for at least two years
3 that included an altered instructional day, specialized diagnostic testing, and research-
4 based strategies to improve reading skills and was retained at least twice in grades
5 kindergarten through three; or

6 (5) has successfully completed an alternative assessment in reading
7 approved by the district.

8 (e) In this section, "significant reading deficiency" means that a student does
9 not meet the minimum skill levels for reading competency in the areas of phonemic
10 awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, and reading fluency, including verbal
11 skills and reading comprehension, under standards established by the state board for
12 the student's grade level.

13 **Sec. 14.30.761. Temporary waiver of district reading program**
14 **requirement.** The department may provide a temporary waiver to a school district of
15 a reading program required under AS 14.30.760 for a period not to exceed three years
16 if the district demonstrates to the satisfaction of the department that the district is
17 taking necessary steps toward establishing and implementing the reading program.
18 The department may extend a temporary waiver granted under this section if the
19 district can demonstrate that full implementation of a district reading program was
20 delayed by an extreme circumstance over which the district had no control.

21 **Sec. 14.30.762. Audit of district reading program.** The department shall
22 provide an audit of each district reading program to determine consistency with the
23 standards established under AS 14.30.760. The department shall perform the audit
24 seven years after full implementation of the program or 10 years after the first year of
25 implementation of the program, whichever is sooner.