

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE PETE HIGGINS

SPONSOR STATEMENT

“An Act extending the special education service agency; and providing for an effective date”

HB 87 extends the sunset requirement to the Special Education Service Agency (SESA), a not-for-profit organization established in statute in 1986. SESA is governed by the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education and its own dependent board of directors.

SESA assists school districts in fulfilling requirements for the “Individuals with American Disabilities Education Act”. Districts are not always able to fully serve students with significant low incidence disabilities. SESA has specialty educators that are trained to teach and support teachers and administrators who work with students that are deaf, deaf-blind, mentally retarded, hearing impaired, blind and visually impaired, orthopedically disabled, health-impaired in other ways and severely emotionally disturbed.

The 2012 Legislative Audit found that SESA performs a valuable and unduplicated effective and efficient service to school districts and therefore recommends renewal of the program. SESA services (delivered via videoconference and in person) mean that students are able to be educated in their own community and not forced to move due to a lack of available expertise.

HB 87 recommends we extend the program to June 30, 2021.