

**HOUSE BILL NO. 197**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES LEDOUX, Thompson, Reinbold, Peggy Wilson

Introduced: 4/2/13

Referred: Education, Finance

**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 uncoded 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) By September 1 of each year, to the extent allowable under state and  
10       federal privacy laws, a school district shall publish on the Internet and report to the  
11       board information from 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 a new section 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 substantial 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, including valid and reliable diagnostic  
16 assessments to identify substantial reading deficiencies;

17 (2) participation in statewide assessments;

18 (3) elimination of social promotion of students to the next grade level  
19 based on age or other nonacademic factors;

20 (4) retention of students in grade three who fail to meet the minimum  
21 reading standards established by the department on mandatory statewide assessments,  
22 except for good cause as provided under (d) of this section;

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

26 (6) as early as possible, regular written notifications of a parent or  
27 guardian of a student in grades kindergarten through three who is identified as having  
28 a substantial reading deficiency describing

29 (A) the nature of the reading deficiency;

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

31 (C) supplemental instructional services and remedial support of

1 the reading deficiency proposed to be provided to the student;

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

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

7 (i) supplemental tutoring using research-based reading  
8 strategies;

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

12 (iii) an assigned mentor in reading;

13 (7) a monitoring plan established for each student who is identified as  
14 having a substantial reading deficiency.

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

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

19 (A) instructional strategies that are research-based and  
20 employed daily for at least 90 minutes at the same time each day; the strategies  
21 must include

22 (i) small group instruction;

23 (ii) reduced pupil-teacher ratios;

24 (iii) frequent monitoring for progress;

25 (iv) tutoring and mentoring;

26 (v) transitional classes for combined third and fourth  
27 grade students;

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

30 (vii) intensive language and vocabulary instruction that  
31 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;

(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 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 in at least two grades in kindergarten through grade three, and is promoted using additional resources that include specialized diagnostic information, altered instructional days, and individualized reading strategies; or

(4) has received intensive remediation in reading for at least two years that included an altered instructional day, specialized diagnostic testing, and research-

1 based strategies to improve reading skills and was retained in grades one and two.