

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Summary of Senate Changes to House Bill 156

Parental Rights

Section 1. Codifies parental rights by requiring local school boards to adopt policies allowing parents to withdraw their children from any activity, class, or program, or standards based assessment to which the parent objects. Provides parents with at least a two week notice before presentations on human reproduction or sexual matters.

Section 2. Exempts the curricula and materials for The Alaska Safe Children's Act from the definition of "human reproduction or sexual matters."

Fiscal Concerns Addressed

Section 10. The Senate added an amendment to this section that would allow the Department of Education to administer a standards-based assessment between the dates of July 1, 2017 to July 1, 2019 should the United States Department of Education provide notice of its intention to withdraw federal education funding. This has resolved the fiscal concerns associated with the bill and resulted in a zero fiscal note.

Technical Changes to Crisis Prevention Training

Section 11 - Section 16. These sections contain technical corrections to the crisis prevention training established last year in HB 44 by replacing "School" with "District" for tracking trainings. Department of Education has explained that it is logistically challenging to track these trainings at the school level. This will enable the districts to organize and schedule the required trainings.

Physical Examinations for Teachers

Section 17. Allows school districts to require physical examinations for teachers, but clarifies that the district is not required to cover the costs. This change was made at the request of school districts throughout Alaska.

Sex Education Teachers & Curriculum

Section 18. Adds a new section that only a certified teacher, or person supervised by a certified teacher, may teach a class in sex education. It establishes that curriculum and materials for sex education classes must be approved by the school board and available for parents to review. It also provides that before a person who is not a certified teacher

teaches sex education they must be approved by the school board and the person's credentials made available for parents to review.

Section 19. Provides that the teacher certification and supervision requirements do not apply to the sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention training on dating violence abuse awareness. (Bree's/Erin's Law)

Technical Change to Suicide Prevention Training

Section 20. Removing "in grades seven through 12" from AS 14.30.320 to bring AS 14.30.362 into alignment with the requirements contained in four other statutes that "all certificated staff" receive suicide prevention training. This change came at the request of the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.

Procurement Code Exemption for Student Assessments

Section 21. Amends AS 36.30.850(b) to exempt department contracts for student assessments from the state procurement code. This change to statute was made at the request of Interim Commissioner McCauley in order to make the process of selecting an assessment cheaper, more efficient and to improve transparency throughout the process.

Repeal of the 70/30 Provision

Section 22. Repeals AS 14.17.520, the minimum expenditure for instruction. Repeal of the 70/30 provision is supported by school districts, the Alaska Association of School Boards and the State Board of Education.

Student Surveys

Section 24. Repeals sec. 4, Ch. 2, SSSLA 2015, which created an opt-in system for all student surveys. This section will revert the system back to an opt-out for surveys which do not contain information that inquiries into the personal and private family affairs. This was requested by AASB who annually distributes a "School Climate and Connectedness Survey" which is used to improve the school environment.