

# Alaska State Legislature

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## Representative Dean Westlake Sponsor Statement

### **House Bill 135 "School Construction Grant Program"**

This bill allows the Department of Education commissioner to grant time extensions to school districts that are raising a percentage share of project costs for grants as outlined under AS 14.11.008 "School district participation in grant program" for appropriations made under AS 37.05.560 the "Educational facilities maintenance and construction fund".

Currently, AS 14.11.008 requires that school districts provide the required participating share within three years of the date of the appropriation. The Department anticipated that funds would be released to the school district and that the district would have a window of opportunity to arrive at the local match.

However, some projects that have been approved for funding could use more time to raise the required percentage share of project costs. More recent examples of projects that would require more time reside in, but are not limited to, the Yukon Flats School District, Northwest Arctic Borough School District, Yupiit School District and the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. According to the Department of Education & Early Development the 3-year time lapse is appropriate for about 95% of the approved projects, but there's about 5% of the projects that could utilize the granting of a time extension.

The original legislation debated on a 3-year or a 5-year time period to identify these matching funds. This bill would amend the Statute to allow the Commissioner to extend past the three year deadline if the district applies to the commissioner in writing to request an extension and demonstrates good cause for the requested extension.