

The Lower Kuskokwim School District opposes HB 102 for the following reasons:

1. We have a program specifically designed to “grow our own” certified teachers with fluency and literacy in the indigenous language of our students. The plan helps provide teachers with expertise in language and culture, and who have completed a teacher preparation program. This helps in the district’s ability to fill teaching positions with those comfortable and familiar with village communities, and provides excellent role models for children.
2. LKSD does not hire Type M certified teachers because we want instructors who are fully knowledgeable in teaching pedagogy, child development, and instructional methods that are proven. Hiring of Type M certified teachers allows instruction by those who have knowledge in a subject area but not training as a teacher. This is the equivalent of hiring a math teacher to teach a language arts class simply because the individual is fluent in English. The training required for each content area is different and calls for different skills.
3. Our Dual Language model requires teachers who are fully trained and skilled in two languages, Yugtun and English. Content areas are taught specifically in one or the other and require certified teachers for delivery and instruction.
4. We currently have twenty-six Type I certified instructors with more who have applied and are awaiting confirmation from EED. This is a certificate specifically designed for those with knowledge and expertise in indigenous language and are working toward full Type A certification.
5. HB 102 removes the requirement for proficiency testing if the test is not available in the instructional language a teacher will use. We insist on language proficiency in Yugtun for our teachers who will teach in Yugtun. Does the new regulation remove Praxis testing for teachers because it is not available in Yugtun? There is a provision that allows test takers whose first language is not English to have more time to work on the test. Most of our teachers have found this to be sufficient to meet their needs.
6. The proposed HB 102 would be more restrictive for teachers in our district because it gives one-year certification that may be renewed upon request of the employer. Type I certificates are for five years and may be renewed one time. The current Type I certificate allows instructors more time for achieving Type A certification.
7. We do not understand the rationale for this bill and do not support it as written

I would be more than willing to talk to any of you further about our programs in LKSD and the work we have done with EED.

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