



Dear Representative Drummond and House Education Committee:

Please support House Bill 64 to create a legislative task force for improving reading proficiency statewide.

As you know, students in Alaska have scored low in English reading and writing for a long time. The most recent data available, the results from the AMP testing in 2015, shows that 80,000 schoolchildren in Alaska are behind in reading and approximately 61% of students did not meet state standards. How can we continue to fail to meet the needs of so many Alaskan schoolchildren? Moreover, our state has no plans to raise our students into the ranks of academic proficiency.

The Legislature can take the lead for important changes needed in reading instruction statewide. Enacting a Reading and Dyslexia Task Force will shed light on the best practices of reading instruction. A nationally recognized expert can provide independent, third party expertise on sustainable and scalable curriculum. Additionally, the Task Force can lay the tracks for the implementation of improved reading instruction and recommend guidelines for compliance.

It is estimated 20% - one in five - people have dyslexia. The term dyslexia appears nowhere in our state's regulations and has only recently "existed". Appropriate intervention needs to take place to provide remediation.

Improving literacy for all children will improve academic levels. Isn't that the goal of education?

We urgently ask your support and pass this bill for Reading for All Students and the Effects of Dyslexia on Some Students Task Force.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Claire Kretzschmar  
Co-Chair, Decoding Dyslexia AK