

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE

RULES

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

ETHICS



SENATOR Tom Begich
Senate Democratic Leader

WHILE IN SESSION
STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, AK 99801
(907) 465-3704

•
WHILE IN ANCHORAGE
1500 W BENSON BLVD
ANCHORAGE, AK 99503
(907) 269-0169

CS HB 153: Alaska Reads Act Sectional Analysis *Amended*

CS Sponsor Substitute House Bill 153 (EDU)
Version: 31-LS0928\U

Section 1.

Establishes this Act as the Alaska Reads Act.

Section 2.

Amends AS 14.03.060(e) to include an Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) approved early education program, including head start, as part of an elementary school.

Section 3.

Amends AS 14.03.072(a) to include reading intervention services in addition to intervention strategies for early literacy.

Section 4.

Amends AS 14.03.078(a) which directs DEED to include information collected under AS 14.03.120, Parent as Teachers, and AS 14.30-760 – 14.30.775, the Alaska Reads Act, in their annual report to the legislature.

Section 5.

Amends AS 14.03.080(d) by changing the date a student is eligible to enter kindergarten and establishes an eligibility waiver process.

Section 6.

Amends AS 14.03.080 by adding new subsection (g) which changes the date a child is eligible to enter a public early education program.

Section 7.

Amends AS 14.03.120 by adding new subsection (h) which establishes annual reporting requirements for school districts regarding student performance metrics in grades K-3. This includes data relating to class size, the number and percentage of students in K-3 who are proficient at grade-level skill reading, and number and percentage of students who are retained from advancing in grades K-3.

Section 8.

Creates a stair-step, three-year grant program to provide training and assist a school district in developing an early education program. In year one, the lowest performing 10% of school districts will be eligible for a grant to establish a district-wide, high quality early education program. In year two, the next lowest performing 15% of school districts will be eligible for the three-year grant program to establish an early education program. In year three, the grants will be available to the third lowest performing 15% of school districts, then the third highest 20% of school districts in year four, then the second highest performing 20% of school districts in year five, and finally, the highest performing 20% of school districts in year six. Over six fiscal years, all school districts are offered the opportunity to participate.

At the end of the three-year grant cycle, DEED will be responsible for determining if the district's early education program complies with state standards, as established by the State Board of Education (board) in section 9.

AS 14.03.420 codifies the Parents As Teachers (PAT) program as a program of the state within DEED, and specifies criteria for PAT to demonstrate its efficacy in supporting school districts with pre-K education.

Section 9.

Amends AS 14.07.020(a) and directs DEED to supervise all early education programs, approve those early education programs established under AS 14.03.410. This section also establishes a new reading program, AS 14.07.065, and reading intervention programs of participating schools, AS 14.30.770.

Section 10.

AS 14.07.020(c) is amended to define an "early education program" as a pre-K program for students three to five years old if its primary function is educational. The 3-year-old students are not included in the program this bill proposes but are included to ensure they are not excluded from existing State and Federal programs.

Section 11.

Amends AS 14.07.050 to allow DEED to supply supplemental reading textbooks and materials related to intervention services established under AS 14.30.765 and AS 14.30.770.

Section 12.

Amends AS 14.07.165(a), relating to the duties of the state Board of Education and Early Development (board) and directs the board to adopt regulations establishing standards for an early education program that is (1) half-day, (2) full-day, and (3) less than half day and is locally-designed and evidence-based. The lead teacher of a program must hold a valid teacher

certificate and have satisfactorily completed a minimum of six credit hours in early childhood education or completed the six credits within one year of the teacher's employment, or have two or more years of experience teaching kindergarten or other early education programs. Regulations must also establish the development of appropriate objectives and accommodations for all children, which allow districts to adapt content to be culturally appropriate to local communities.

Section 13.

Amends AS 14.17.500 by adding new subsection (d) that establishes an early education student shall be counted in the school district's average daily membership (ADM) as a half day student once the early education program has been approved by the department.

Section 14.

Amends AS 14.17.905(a) to include students in early education programs approved by the department in the definition of an elementary school.

Section 15.

Amends AS 14.17.905 by adding new subsection (d) to avoid letting school districts count pre-K students twice in Foundation Formula ADM calculations.

Section 16.

Amends AS 14.20.015(c) to ensure teaching certificate reciprocity for teachers moving to Alaska from out-of-state and adds that such teachers must complete at least three credits or equivalency in evidence-based reading instruction in order to be eligible for an Alaska teaching endorsement in elementary education.

Section 17.

Amends AS 14.20.020 by adding new subsection (l) that requires all teachers to complete at least three credits or equivalency in evidence-based reading instruction in order to be eligible for an endorsement in elementary education.

Section 18.

Establishes Article 15, Reading Intervention Programs.

Establishes AS 14.30.760, a comprehensive reading intervention program, designed to increase literacy for children in kindergarten through grade three. The department will be required to establish a system of support for teachers of kindergarten through grade three students, adopt a statewide screening or assessment tool to identify students with reading deficiencies, and provide support to teachers of kindergarten through grade three students through training on the use of the statewide screening or assessment tool and on the science of reading. The department will be required to administer the statewide screening or assessment tool three times each school year, once in the fall, once in the winter, and once in the spring, beginning in 2020. The statewide screening or assessment tool must determine specified skills at each grade level: kindergarten, first grade, and second/third grades.

School districts will be required to offer reading intervention services in addition to core reading instruction to all students in kindergarten through grade three who exhibit a reading deficiency as

determined by the statewide screening or assessment. The reading intervention services must be provided by a district reading teacher, include explicit and systematic instruction with proven results based on scientific research, incorporate daily targeted small group reading instruction, and be based on students' needs as determined by regular monitoring of student progress. The reading intervention services must be reviewed based on department-approved response to intervention or multi-tiered system support models.

For each student participating in the reading intervention services, the district must establish an individual reading plan. For all students with an individual reading plan and who also score in the lowest achievement level on the district screening or statewide reading assessment, the district must provide the reading intervention services both during and outside the school term. Outside the school term, the reading intervention services must be staffed with reading teachers and be directed by the students individual reading plan.

Districts or schools must notify parents if a student exhibits a reading deficiency at any time during the school year. Notification must occur within 15 days of the deficiency being identified. The initial notification must state the district or school identified the student as having a reading deficiency and that an improvement plan will be developed, describe the current services the student receives and the proposed additional services the student will need to remedy the deficiency, and identify strategies the parent or guardian could use at home to help the student succeed in reading. If the student is in grade three, the notification must include a request for a meeting with the parent, the student's teacher, and other district staff to discuss appropriate grade level progression. The meeting must take place at least 45 days prior to the end of the school year.

Establishes that a student in grade three should demonstrate proficient reading skills to progress to grade four. Multiple pathways are provided for students to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for progression to grade four, including performance on the statewide reading screening or assessment or an alternative reading assessment as determined by the State Board of Education, or, as evidenced through a student reading portfolio. Good cause exemptions are included, such as having a disability, or the student is learning English as a second language. Provides a process for parents or guardians to request an exemption for their student.

Districts must provide intensive reading intervention services to all students who do not progress or receive a good cause exemption. For students who do not progress to grade four who previously experienced delayed grade level progression, an intensive acceleration class must also be provided by the district.

Establishes a literacy program to provide direct support and intervention services to up to ten low-performing Alaska schools each year that apply for the services. The department will be responsible for providing each selected school up to two reading specialists. A reading specialist is a person who is employed and funded by the department and who meets requirements established by the board. One specialist would be focused on the implementation of reading intervention services consistently across classrooms, modeling effective instructional strategies, coaching and mentoring teachers and paraprofessionals, training teachers in data literacy, leading and supporting reading leadership teams, and reporting on school and student performance to the department. The supporting reading specialist would assist with all the activities described above

or serve as the reading specialist for the school's early education program, depending on the makeup of the specific school.

The department will be required to establish a process for the reading specialists to report on program implementation, work with the reading specialists to establish improvement goals, including measures of interim progress, to select and purchase additional reading materials to supplement the reading intervention services, and pay travel costs for a reading specialist to attend relevant trainings identified or hosted by the department. The department will also be responsible for periodically reviewing staff development programs and recommending to the board programs that meet high quality standards as defined under AS 14.07.065.

Establishes AS 14.30.770, schools selected to participate in an intensive school reading program will be required to ensure that the reading specialist(s) were not required to perform functions that divert from the duties assigned by the department, coordinate with the reading specialists to redesign the school's daily schedule to provide time dedicated to literacy program activities, hold public meetings to present information on the literacy and reading intervention program services to parents and guardians, present an annual update to the public on these program services at a noticed public meeting, and create partnerships between the school, families, and community that focus on promoting literacy and increasing time spent reading.

Under this new section, the department will be required to publish on its website and make available to the public a completed application from each school selected to participate in the literacy program, the literacy plan implemented at each selected school, and a data analysis of the success of the literacy program and intervention services conducted by an independent contractor.

AS 14.30.775 aligns use of the word "district" in this Act with the definitions given elsewhere in statute when referring to a school district.

Section 19.

Directs early education program staff to be included in those organizations required to report evidence of child abuse.

Section 20.

Repeals AS 14.03.410, the early education grant program, in 11 years once all school districts have had the opportunity to participate.

Section 21.

Establishes a Teacher Retention Working Group as a new uncodified law of the State of Alaska.

Section 22.

Is applicability language, relating to endorsements in elementary education issued on or after the effective date of this act.

Section 23.

Is transition language, directing the department to use 2018-19 school accountability rankings for

purposes of determining the first cohort of lowest performing schools, to identify their pre-K grant eligibility for FY 21.

Section 24.

Establishes an effective date of July 1, 2020.