



Representative Chris Tuck

Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 216
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 465-2095
Toll-free: (866) 465-2095

House Bill 164 Version G – Early Ed Programs; Reading; Virtual Ed Updated Sectional Analysis

“An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to reading; relating to public schools and school districts; relating to early education programs; relating to funding for early education programs; relating to school age eligibility; relating to reports by the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to reports by school districts; relating to certification and competency of teachers; relating to assessing reading deficiencies and providing reading intervention services to public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through three; relating to textbooks and materials for reading intervention services; establishing a reading program in the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to school operating funds; relating to a virtual education library; and providing for an effective date.”

Section 1 – Establishes this Act as the Alaska Reads Act.

Section 2 – Inserts legislative intent language recognizing a student’s right to learn to read through culturally responsive materials in multiple languages.

Section 3 – Amends AS 14.03.040, Day in session, to clarify the length of a school day for grades 4- 12.

Section 4 – Amends AS 14.03.060 to give the Alaska Department of Early Education and Development (DEED) the ability to approve and supervise a district early education program.

Section 5 – Amends AS 14.03.072 by aligning terminology and requiring all districts provide information regarding the importance of early reading, adult literacy, and socio-emotional learning to parents and guardians of students at the first parent-teacher conference of the year.

Section 6 – Amends AS 14.03.078 by directing DEED to employ a data analyst and include in their annual report to the legislature information collected under AS 14.03.120 and AS 14.30-760 – 14.30.775.

Section 7 – Amends AS 14.03.080 to allow children who are at least four (4) years of age to attend publicly provided early education programs.

Section 8 – Amends AS 14.03.120 by adding a new subsection that establishes annual reporting requirements for school districts to report student performance metrics in grades K-3.

Section 9 – Amends AS 14.03 by establishing a statewide early education grant program. The early education grant program includes financial support, professional training, and technical assistance to school districts to develop or improve their high-quality, locally designed, culturally responsive, universal voluntary pre-K program.

Participation in the grant program is not required and school districts are not mandated to establish a pre-K program.

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 10 – Amends AS 14.07.020 and directs DEED to supervise all early education programs, approve those early education programs established under AS 14.03.410, establish a new reading program (AS 14.07.065), and offer reading intervention programs to participating schools (AS 14.30.770).

Section 11 – AS 14.07.020 is amended to define an early education program as a pre-K program, but not including a head start program, for students three to five years old if its primary function is educational.

Section 12 – Amends AS 14.07.050 to direct DEED to consult schools and tribes when providing optional textbooks to school districts who request additional support while implementing reading intervention services provided under the authorizing statutes in this Act.

Section 13 – Amends AS 14.07.165 by directing the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development (state board) to establish regulations for a high-quality, locally designed, evidence-based, culturally responsive early education program for children who are four and five years of age.

Section 14 – Amends AS 14.07.168 by directing the state board to include information and analysis collected under AS 14.30.800.

Section 15 – Amends AS 14.07.180 by directing the state board to establish standards for reviewing and approving early education through grade 3 language arts curricula based on the five components of evidence-based reading.

Section 16 – Amends AS 14.17.500 by adding new subsections on how a student participating in a DEED-approved early education program is counted under a school district's Average Daily Membership (ADM) calculations.

Sections 17 and 18 – Amends AS 14.17.505 by increasing the unreserved fund balance a school district may carry forward into a new fiscal year.

Section 19 – Amends AS 14.17.905 to include students in early education programs approved by DEED in the definition of an elementary school.

Section 20 – Amends AS 14.20.015 to ensure teaching certificate reciprocity and teaching proficiency for teachers moving to Alaska. The section inserts a provision requiring any out-of-state preliminary teacher being certified under this section to teach in Alaska to complete additional training through an Alaska Native lens and using Alaska Native cultural standards.

Section 21 – Amends AS 14.20.020 by adding a new subsection to require all teachers to complete at least three credits or equivalency in evidence-based reading instruction to be eligible for an endorsement in elementary education. The section inserts a provision for any out-of-state preliminary teacher being certified under this section to teach in Alaska that they must also complete additional training through an Alaska Native lens and using Alaska Native cultural standards.

Section 22 – Inserts a new section to AS 14.30 and authorizes DEED to collaborate with a school district to develop an Alaska Native language immersion program for kindergarten through grade three. The section allows DEED to provide technical and financial support to school districts.

Section 23 – Establishes Article 15, Reading Intervention.

Establishes AS 14.30.760, which directs DEED to establish a culturally responsive statewide reading program and support school districts in implementation.

Establishes AS 14.30.765, which permits school districts to opt-out of providing culturally responsive intensive reading intervention services to K-3 students who are identified as struggling readers.

Establishes AS 14.30.770, which directs DEED to establish a statewide reading program to assist the lowest-performing school districts serving K-3 students in providing reading intervention services.

Section 24 – Establishes Article 16, Virtual Education.

Establishes AS 14.30.800, a virtual education library operated by DEED in collaboration with educators, school districts, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and other local education resources.

Section 25 – Amends AS 14.60.010 to provide a definition of “culturally responsive.”

Section 26 – Directs early education program staff to be included in those required to report evidence of child abuse.

Section 27 – Establishes a July 1, 2024, deadline for when DEED must make virtual education courses available.

Section 28 – Provides applicability language relating to endorsements in elementary education issued on or after the effective date of this Act.

Section 29 – Directs DEED to provide a detailed analysis of this Act to the Alaska State Legislature no later than the 30th day of the First Regular Session of the 38th Alaska State Legislature.

Section 30 – Is transition language that prohibits DEED from approving more than \$3,000,000 in state aid for early education programs for FY 23 above the previous fiscal year.

Section 31 – Is transition language that permits DEED to begin adopting the regulations needed to actualize this Act prior to the effective date of the legislation.

Section 32 – Establishes an effective date of July 1, 2022.