

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate Education Committee

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Members:

Senator Roger Holland (chair)
Senator Gary Stevens (vice-chair)
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Shelley Hughes
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Senate Bill 225

Teacher Apprentice Programs

Sponsor Statement

Alaska, like the rest of the United States, is facing tremendous difficulty putting high-quality teachers in front of our students. When districts can't hire enough teachers, it places a heavier burden on those teachers that do show up. Faced with an already difficult first day of work, these new teachers burn out quickly and leave the profession. The result is a revolving door of aspiring educators, never building the continuity and community that is found in effective schools. Ultimately, it shows up in our students' test scores.

The problem is multi-faceted and there is no single solution. That's why SB 225 attempts to compliment other legislation with a multi-pronged effort aimed at improving teacher recruitment and retention. This bill borrows from the innovative ideas found around the country and plucks the low hanging fruit that has already been identified in current statutes.

At the heart of SB 225 is the creation of a registered apprenticeship program for teachers. The bill directs the Departments of Labor and Education to assist districts in developing approved registered apprenticeships, opening new pathways for paraprofessionals and new funding opportunities to pay for it. Additionally, SB 225 establishes a teacher residency program as a new option for those with a four-year degree to become fully certified teachers. Good ideas remain on the shelf unless there is funding to support them. So, the bill also creates a teacher recruitment and retention grant fund. This fund will support ingenuity from districts to solve the problem at a local level, then disseminate that innovation for other districts to emulate. Additionally, SB 225 provides more flexibility to the state board of education to create additional pathways to certification without compromising the quality standards we need to uphold.

SB 225 is an important education bill to compliment other efforts currently underway. I hope you will join the Senate Education Committee members in supporting this bill.