

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate Education Committee

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Senate Bill 111

Early Education, Reading Intervention, and Virtual Education

Sectional Analysis for version R.A

- Sec. 1 Establishes this Act as the Alaska Reads Act.
- Sec. 2 AS 14.03.040, relating to day-in-session requirements, is amended to address a gap in the current law. The change makes clear that kindergarten and early education programs are not subject to the requirements. Section 20 clarifies that the state board of education should adopt regulations for those programs.
- Sec. 3 AS 14.03.060(e), relating to the definition of an elementary school, is amended by:
- Changing the term “pre-elementary” to “early education” (defined in sections 14 and 17).
 - Adding the term “approved by” to conform to the addition of AS 14.03.410(a)(2) (added by section 14).
 - Making clearer the relationship between Head Start agencies and DEED.
 - Removing the language regarding ADM count, as it is moved to AS 14.03.410(f) (within section 14) and AS 14.17.500 (section 25).
- Sec. 4 AS 14.03.060(e), relating to the definition of an elementary school, is amended in 2034 to reverse the addition of “approved by” in section 3. This change is required to conform with the repeal of AS 14.03.410 (related to early education funding).

- Sec. 5 Amends AS 14.03.072, related to providing information to K-3 parents, by changing the word “literacy” to “reading,” inserting a requirement that the intervention strategies be culturally responsive, incorporating the reading intervention services added by section 33, replacing “retention” with “progression,” and adding a requirement to provide a list of resources to improve adult literacy.
- Sec. 6 Removes the reference to reading intervention services after the repeal of AS 14.30.765 in 2034.
- Sec. 7 Amends AS 14.03.078(a), related to DEED reporting requirements, by:
- adding school districts as a recipient of the DEED’s annual report.
 - expanding the reporting requirement to incorporate all reports in AS 14.03.120, including those listed below.
 - adding ratios of administrative employees to students, administrative employees to teachers, and teacher to student ratios to the annual report.
 - adding a progress report of the reading intervention programs established by section 33.
 - Adding a report on the effectiveness and participation of the parents-as-teachers program established by section 14.
- Sec. 8 Repeals the reports on reading intervention and parents-as-teachers when the programs sunset in 2034.
- Sec. 9 Adds two subsections to AS 14.03.078, relating to department reporting requirements, which requires reports to be posted online and defines an administrative employee (as referenced in section 7).
- Sec. 10 Amends AS 14.03.080(c), related to under school age children entering public school, by limiting participation to four- and five-year-old children and clarifying that a child in an early education program does not need to move to kindergarten at age five.
- Sec. 11 Reverses the changes in section 10 in 2034.
- Sec. 12 Reinstates the language from the current AS 14.03.080(d), returning to the current language after the sunset of the early education program takes effect.
- Sec. 13 Adds two new subsection to AS 14.03.120, relating to district reporting requirements.
- (h) establishes an annual report regarding student performance metrics in kindergarten through third grade.
- (i) improves public access to the data collected under AS 14.03.120.

- Sec. 14 Establishes early education programs and grants under AS 14.03, which includes the following subsections:
- AS 14.03.410(a) directs the DEED to provide training to help districts develop.
 - AS 14.03.410(b) authorizes DEED to award 3-year early education grants up to \$3M per year.
 - AS 14.03.410(c) requires DEED to rank the districts and prioritize lower ranked districts. This subsection also limits eligibility if there is insufficient need in the district due to Head Start or other programs.
 - AS 14.03.410(d) authorizes up to two additional years of grant funding if the program is not able to qualify for ADM inclusion at the end of the 3-year grant.
 - AS 14.03.410(e) requires DEED approval of a program meeting high-quality standards for ADM inclusion.
 - AS 14.03.410(f) makes clear that the grants are subject to appropriation.
 - AS 14.03.410(g) is a requirement that districts consult with Head Start programs before applying for a pre-k grant.
 - AS 14.03.410(h) provides definitions.
 - AS 14.03.420 codifies the Parents-as-Teachers program.
- Sec. 15 Amends AS 14.07.020(a), relating to duties of the Department of Education and Early Development, by:
- Adding supervision over, and approval of, early education programs.
 - Adding the support and intervention requirements relating to reading intervention programs (from section 33).
 - Requiring an annual convening of stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs established by this bill and to review the regulations adopted by the Board to implement this bill.
- Sec. 16 Reverses the changes in section 15 in 2034.
- Sec. 17 Changes AS 14.07.020(c), relating to the duties of the department, to update the term “pre-elementary school” to “early education program.”
- Sec. 18 Alters AS 14.07.050, relating to the selection of textbooks, to incorporate the new sections AS 14.30.765 and 14.30.770, which are added under section 33 of this bill.
- Sec. 19 Reverses the changes in section 18 in 2034.
- Sec. 20 AS 14.07.165(a), relating to the regulations adopted by the State Board of Education, is amended to establish the standards for early education programs.
- Sec. 21 A new paragraph is added to AS 14.07.168, relating to the annual report by the state board of education to the legislature, which requires the inclusion of a review of the

effectiveness of the virtual consortium added by section 34 of this bill.

- Sec. 22 Reverses the changes in section 21 in 2034.
- Sec. 23 Amends AS 14.07.180(a), relating to school districts curricula, by requiring the board to utilize the components of evidence-based reading instruction (Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading comprehension).
- Sec. 24 AS 14.14.115(a), relating to cooperative arrangements, expands the ability of a school district to form agreements with private businesses, non-profits, and government agencies, but prohibits state funds from benefiting private educational institutions.
- Sec. 25 Add new subsections to AS 14.17.500, relating to student count estimates, which allows
- districts to count early education students from approved programs at one-half of a full-time equivalent student.
 - prohibits including early education students that participate in another state or federally funded program.
 - provides a process for limiting the budget increase related to including early education students in the ADM count to \$3M per year.
- Sec. 26 Sunsets the inclusion of early education students in a district's ADM in 2034.
- Sec. 27 AS 14.17.905, relating to defining a school for calculating school size factors, is amended to account for the inclusion of early education students when defining an elementary school in a district with between 101 and 425 students.
- Sec. 28 Reverses the change in section 27 to conform to the sunset in 2034.
- Sec. 29 Amends AS 14.20.015(c), related to preliminary teacher certificates, by adding a requirement that teachers with preliminary certificates complete board required coursework, training, and testing in evidence-based reading instruction.
- Sec. 30 Reverses the change in section 29 in 2034.
- Sec. 31 Amends AS 14.20.020(i), related to teacher certificates, to require the state board of education to periodically reevaluate the acceptable level of demonstrated competency required to issue a teacher certificate.
- Sec. 32 Adds a new subsection AS 14.20.020(l), related to teacher certificates, which requires teachers to complete board required coursework, training, and testing in evidence-based reading instruction.

Sec. 33

This section adds several new sections of law related to reading intervention:

- AS 14.30.760 directs DEED to establish a statewide screening tool to identify students with reading deficiencies and establishes a timeline in which screenings are conducted.
- AS 14.30.765(a) directs each school district to offer intensive reading intervention services to K-3 students exhibiting a reading deficiency and to communicate with parents and guardians.
- AS 14.30.765(b) directs school districts to provide individual reading improvement plans for K-3 students exhibiting a reading deficiency and defines the plan's components.
- AS 14.30.765(c) requires districts to notify a student's parents that their child has demonstrated a reading deficiency along with corresponding information about remedying the deficiency.
- AS 14.30.765(d) requires a parent-teacher conference for K-2 students with a reading deficiency to discuss delayed progression as a potential intervention strategy of last resort.
- AS 14.30.765(e) established a statewide policy to determine if a student is ready for promotion to the fourth grade.
- AS 14.30.765(f) requires a parent-teacher conference for third grade students with a reading deficiency to discuss delayed progression as an intervention and establishes a parental waiver to allow a student to advance to fourth grade without being prepared, which requires an additional 20 hours of summer intervention services.
- AS 14.30.765(g) establishes best interest considerations for superintendents required to decide if a student should progress to the next grade.
- AS 14.30.765(h) provides an opportunity for a parent that misses the required conference to discussion delaying progress to reschedule that conference.
- AS 14.30.765(i) directs the district to provide additional intervention for students that do not promote or promote with a waiver.
- AS 14.30.765(j) directs the district to provide a path for mid-year promotion (upon request) when a student does not promote with their peers.
- AS 14.30.765(k) establishes a policy for mid-year promotion of a K-3 student that

does not progress to the next grade.

- AS 14.30.765(l) requires that a student promoting mid-year continue the individual reading improvement plan.
- AS 14.30.765(m) limits retention by a superintendent to one year.
- AS 14.30.765(n) provide a definition for reading teacher.
- AS 14.30.770 directs the department to establish a statewide reading program, including department-funded reading specialists, to assist schools in setting up their intervention services and coaching teachers on how to conduct evidence-based reading instruction.
- AS 14.30.775 requires the department to adopt a definition of “dyslexia” in regulation.
- AS 14.30.780 provides definitions.

- Sec. 34 Adds a new section of law, AS 14.30.800, which establishes a virtual education consortium. This consortium allows districts to offer virtual access to student courses and professional development courses through a statewide system hosted by the department of education. This section also creates a reading specialist position to remotely assist districts to improve reading instruction.
- Sec. 35 Provides title-wide definitions for “culturally responsive” and “parent or guardian.”
- Sec. 36 Adds “early education program” to the definition of “organization” in AS 47.17.290, which pertains to mandatory reporters.
- Sec. 37 Repeals AS 14.03.080(d), related to five-year-old students starting kindergarten (to conform to the changes in section 10) and AS 14.03.290(4) (to conform to the definition of “parent or guardian” added in section 35).
- Sec. 38 Sunset provision which repeals the following:
- AS 14.03.120(h) (report of reading improvement statistics added in section 13)
 - AS 14.03.410 (early education funding added in section 14).
 - AS 14.03.420 (Parents-as-Teachers program added in section 14).
 - AS 14.17.500(e) and (f) (limiting funding of early education programs added in 25)

- AS 14.20.020(I) (increased requirements for teaching certificates added in section 33)
- AS 14.30.760 (K-3 reading screeners added in section 33)
- AS 14.30.765 (district reading intervention services added in section 33)
- AS 14.30.770 (department reading specialists added in section 33)
- AS 14.30.775 (definitions related to reading interventions added in section 33)
- AS 14.30.800 (virtual education consortium added in section 34)

- Sec. 39 Sets a deadline for the department of education to complete the set-up of the virtual education consortium by July 1, 2024.
- Sec. 40 Applicability language related to the reading instruction requirement added by section 32 of this bill, which allows teachers with preexisting teaching certificates until July 1, 2024, to meet the new requirements.
- Sec. 41 Requires a report from DEED to the legislature on the effectiveness of programs created by this bill to the thirty-eighth legislature, which allows the legislature to consider extending the programs before they sunset.
- Sec. 42 Transition language, which directs DEED on how the BSA inclusion of currently operating early education students should occur.
- Sec. 43 Transition language, which allows DEED to begin writing regulations before the bill takes effect.
- Sec. 44 Provides an immediate effective date for section 43, which gives the department authority to draft regulations.
- Sec. 45 Provides an effective date of June 30, 2034, for sections 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30, 32, and 40 (these are the sunset provisions).
- Sec. 46 Provides an effective date of July 1, 2023, for all other sections.

Please contact the Education Committee Aide, Ed King at 465-4843, with any questions or concerns.