

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Co-Chair House Resources
Member House Labor & Commerce
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SPONSOR STATEMENT

CS HB 231: ALASKA TEACHER RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Alaska is currently facing a persistent crisis in educator retention and recruitment, that threatens the stability of our classrooms and the future of our students. House Bill 231 is a comprehensive, data-driven solution designed to transform Alaska’s education system into one where educators want to work and are well-supported. This legislation is rooted directly in the Teacher Retention and Recruitment (TRR) Playbook, developed by a diverse group of Alaska stakeholders to address our unique challenges.

Research shows good working conditions lead to higher retention rates. This bill mandates that school districts conduct independent, third-party exit interviews to understand exactly why teachers leave, ensuring their voices shape future policy. Providing long-term security, this bill restructures our retirement systems to offer employee choice. Allowing members to transfer contributions between plans as they grow in their careers. In addition, we are investing in professional growth by supporting mentoring programs for principals and superintendents. This fosters a culture of support throughout the state. This bill seeks to show professional respect, offering security to educators who are in or choose to come to Alaska.

Every child deserves an excellent education. That starts with a stable, high-quality workforce. This bill provides incentives with recruitment and retention bonuses for educators who complete their terms, specifically targeted at keeping our best teachers in the communities that need them most. This aligns with House Bill 106 introduced by Governor Dunleavy in 2023. Reducing turnover ensures children have the continuity they need to thrive. House Bill 231 also modernizes the classroom by increasing state funding for school internet speeds to one gigabyte per second.

Session: State Capitol • Juneau, AK 99801-1182 • RM 108 • (907) 465-3473
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We cannot continue to underfund the education system. This continues the cycle of out migration of our professionals, families and children, our greatest resource. Alaska must invest in the state strategically.

House Bill 231 uses a data-based approach to shape retention strategies, requiring annual reports on personnel turnover and the habitability of state-funded educator housing. The bill addresses the high cost of living in rural Alaska through targeted educator housing subsidy and upgrade grants, which are more cost-effective than constant recruitment cycles for vacant positions.

By expanding paraprofessional pathways and supporting financial literacy training, this legislation focuses on “growing our own” educators and building a sustainable workforce that understands and is committed to the Alaska context.

In conclusion House Bill 231 is not just a bill; it is an alignment of our state’s goals to recruit and retain the very best educators. By implementing these practical, professional, and policy solutions, we are continuing to make Alaska a great state to teach in, a great state to learn in, and a great state to call home.

I urge your support for this vital investment in Alaska’s future.

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