

**CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 277(EDC)**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Offered:  
Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 **"An Act relating to education; relating to reports regarding correspondence study**  
2 **programs; relating to correspondence study program materials; relating to student**  
3 **transportation funding; relating to eligibility for teacher certification; relating to**  
4 **reemploying retired members of the teachers' retirement system at regional resource**  
5 **centers; relating to reading proficiency incentive grants; requiring the Legislative**  
6 **Budget and Audit Committee to procure an education funding study; and providing for**  
7 **an effective date."**

8 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

9 \* **Section 1.** AS 14.03.120 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

10 (k) A district shall annually file with the department and make available to the  
11 public by November 1 each year, a report regarding correspondence study programs  
12 operated by the district during the previous school year that includes

13 (1) the total administrative expenditures for the correspondence study

1 program, including expenditures toward real estate or facility rentals located outside of  
2 the school district, promotional materials and services, and personnel information that  
3 is disaggregated by classification;

4 (2) the total number of students enrolled in the correspondence study  
5 program on May 1 of the year, disaggregated by grade level;

6 (3) the demographic information of enrolled students, including the  
7 community of residence for each student;

8 (4) the amount of allotment funding authorized under AS 14.03.310  
9 designated for each student, disaggregated by grade;

10 (5) a categorical accounting of allotment expenditures, including  
11 curriculum and instructional materials; technology hardware, computer software, and  
12 streaming services; tutoring and academic instruction services; tuition and fees to  
13 postsecondary education institutions; physical education and extracurricular activities;  
14 and travel and cultural activities;

15 (6) the number and disaggregated value of allotment expenditures  
16 reviewed and denied by the district, including the reason for denial;

17 (7) the total value of carried forward allotment funds at year-end,  
18 including the average carried forward amount for each grade level.

19 \* **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.300 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

20 (c) A student who ceases to be enrolled in a correspondence study program  
21 may retain textbooks, equipment, and other curriculum materials provided to the  
22 student through the program, including materials purchased through an annual student  
23 allotment provided to a parent or guardian of the student under AS 14.03.310.

24 \* **Sec. 3.** AS 14.07.168 is amended to read:

25 **Sec. 14.07.168. Report to the legislature.** Not later than the 30th legislative  
26 day of each regular session of the legislature, the board shall prepare and present in  
27 person to the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education an annual  
28 report that describes the efforts of the board to develop, maintain, and continuously  
29 improve a comprehensive quality public education system, as provided for under the  
30 bylaws of the board. The report must include

31 (1) a summary of the resolves and rationales provided in support of

1 policy decisions made under AS 14.03.015;

2 (2) program and curriculum changes made, discussed, or  
3 recommended in meetings held under AS 14.07.125;

4 (3) additional information relevant to efforts made to improve and  
5 maintain the public education system;

6 (4) a summary of implementation and utilization of the consortium  
7 established under AS 14.30.800, including a review of consortium effectiveness and  
8 the participation rates of districts, teachers, and students;

9 **(5) information reported to the department regarding**  
10 **correspondence study programs as required under AS 14.03.120(k).**

11 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 14.09.010(a) is amended to read:

12 (a) A school district that provides student transportation services for the  
13 transportation of students who reside a distance from established schools is eligible to  
14 receive funding for operating or subcontracting the operation of the transportation  
15 system for students to and from the schools within the student's transportation service  
16 area. Subject to appropriation, the amount of funding provided by the state for  
17 operating the student transportation system is the amount of a school district's ADM,  
18 less the ADM for the district's correspondence programs during the current fiscal year,  
19 multiplied by the per student amount for the school district as follows, for the school  
20 years beginning July 1, **2026** [2025]:

21 DISTRICT	PER STUDENT AMOUNT
22 Alaska Gateway	<b><u>\$2,760</u></b> [\$2,529]
23 Aleutians East	377
24 Anchorage	<b><u>784</u></b> [529]
25 Annette Island	<b><u>278</u></b> [221]
26 Bering Strait	59
27 Bristol Bay	<b><u>3,687</u></b> [3,247]
28 Chatham	341
29 Copper River	<b><u>2,867</u></b> [1,928]
30 Cordova	408
31 Craig	<b><u>1,388</u></b> [514]

1	Delta/Greely	<b><u>2,164</u></b> [2,013]
2	Denali	<b><u>3,573</u></b> [2,197]
3	Dillingham	<b><u>1,831</u></b> [1,480]
4	Fairbanks	<b><u>1,243</u></b> [992]
5	Galena	<b><u>486</u></b> [309]
6	Haines	<b><u>1,140</u></b> [761]
7	Hoonah	363
8	Iditarod	257
9	Juneau	<b><u>865</u></b> [733]
10	Kake	330
11	Kashunamiut	6
12	Kenai Peninsula	<b><u>1,199</u></b> [1,112]
13	Ketchikan	<b><u>1,020</u></b> [833]
14	Klawock	710
15	Kodiak Island	<b><u>1,323</u></b> [971]
16	Kuspuk	794
17	Lake and Peninsula	<b><u>496</u></b> [466]
18	Lower Kuskokwim	337
19	Lower Yukon	<b><u>5</u></b> [1]
20	Matanuska-Susitna	<b><u>1,334</u></b> [1,106]
21	Nenana	714
22	Nome	<b><u>900</u></b> [755]
23	North Slope	<b><u>1,557</u></b> [1,361]
24	Northwest Arctic	<b><u>49</u></b> [30]
25	Pelican	88
26	Petersburg	<b><u>475</u></b> [455]
27	Saint Mary's	<b><u>244</u></b> [234]
28	Sitka	<b><u>654</u></b> [520]
29	Skagway	44
30	Southeast Island	1,404
31	Southwest Region	726

1	Unalaska	<b><u>1,356</u></b> [788]
2	Valdez	<b><u>1,187</u></b> [894]
3	Wrangell	851
4	Yakutat	904
5	Yukon Flats	321
6	Yukon/Koyukuk	364
7	Yupiit	2.

8 \* **Sec. 5.** AS 14.20.015(a) is amended to read:

9 (a) The department shall issue a preliminary teacher certificate to an out-of-  
10 state teacher who meets the requirements of this section. To be eligible for a  
11 preliminary teacher certificate, a person shall

12 (1) have received at least a baccalaureate degree from an institution of  
13 higher education accredited by a recognized **institutional** [REGIONAL] accrediting  
14 association or approved by the commissioner;

15 (2) hold a valid teacher certificate issued by another state;

16 (3) have submitted fingerprints to the department to be used for a  
17 criminal history background check and been found by the department to be suitable for  
18 employment as a teacher under AS 14.20.020(f);

19 (4) have paid the fee required by the department under  
20 AS 14.20.020(c).

21 \* **Sec. 6.** AS 14.20.020(b) is amended to read:

22 (b) A person is not eligible for a teacher certificate unless that person has  
23 received at least a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education  
24 accredited by a recognized **institutional** [REGIONAL] accrediting association or  
25 approved by the commissioner and, if applicable, has passed the examination or  
26 examinations required by (i) of this section. However, this subsection is not applicable  
27 to

28 (1) persons employed in the state public school system on  
29 September 1, 1962;

30 (2) persons issued an emergency certificate during a situation that, in  
31 the judgment of the commissioner, requires the temporary issuance of a certificate to a

1 person not otherwise qualified.

2 \* **Sec. 7.** AS 14.20.022(b) is amended to read:

3 (b) To be eligible for a subject-matter expert limited teacher certificate, a  
4 person shall

5 (1) hold at least a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher  
6 education accredited by a recognized **institutional** [REGIONAL] or national  
7 accrediting association or approved by the commissioner and

8 (A) have majored or minored in the subject that the person will  
9 be teaching; or

10 (B) have at least five years **of** experience in the subject matter  
11 that the person will be teaching;

12 (2) have submitted fingerprints and the fees required by the  
13 Department of Public Safety under AS 12.62.160 for criminal justice information and  
14 a national criminal history record check to the department; the department must have  
15 submitted the fingerprints and fees to the Department of Public Safety for a report of  
16 criminal justice information under AS 12.62 and a national criminal history record  
17 check under AS 12.62.400 and the person must have been found by the department to  
18 be suitable for employment as a teacher under AS 14.20.020(f); and

19 (3) be currently enrolled in an approved post-baccalaureate teacher  
20 education program at **an** [A REGIONALLY ACCREDITED] institution **accredited**  
21 **by an institutional accrediting association** meeting the requirements of  
22 AS 14.20.020(b) that provides for completion of the regular teacher certificate  
23 education requirements within two years after receipt of a subject-matter expert  
24 limited teacher certificate under this section.

25 \* **Sec. 8.** AS 14.20.136(a) is amended to read:

26 (a) Subject to (b) - (d) of this section, a school district **or regional resource**  
27 **center established under AS 14.12.150** may reemploy a member who is retired under  
28 a retirement plan established in AS 14.25.009 - 14.25.220, or a member who is retired  
29 under a retirement plan established in AS 14.25.310 - 14.25.590. In this subsection,  
30 "school district" has the meaning given in AS 14.30.350.

31 \* **Sec. 9.** AS 14.20.136(b) is amended to read:

(b) A member who is retired under AS 14.25.110(a) may not be reemployed under (a) of this section unless the member

(1) certifies that the member and the school district **or regional resource center** did not arrange before the member retired from the school district **or regional resource center** for the member to be reemployed by the school district **or regional resource center** after the member retired; and

(2) has been retired for at least

(A) 60 days if the member is at least 62 years of age; or

(B) six months if the member is less than 62 years of age.

\* **Sec. 10.** AS 14.20.136(c) is amended to read:

(c) Before reemploying a retired member under (a) of this section to fill a position, a school district **or regional resource center** shall

(1) by resolution, adopt a policy that describes the circumstances of a shortage or anticipated shortage of applicants, other than retired members, who are qualified for particular positions and permits rehiring that complies with the requirements of this section; and

(2) publicly advertise the position for 10 business days and actively recruit to fill the position by hiring a person other than a member who is retired.

\* **Sec. 11.** AS 14.20.136(e) is amended to read:

(e) A school district **or regional resource center** that reemploys a member under this section who is retired under the defined benefit retirement plan established in AS 14.25.009 - 14.25.220 is required to

(1) provide the administrator with

(A) a copy of the resolution and policy adopted under (c) of this section; and

(B) for every retired member who is rehired, a report identifying the member by name and describing the

(i) circumstances of the shortage that necessitated the rehire; and

(ii) actions taken by the school district **or regional resource center** to comply with [SCHOOL DISTRICT] policy adopted

under (c) of this section and the requirements of this section; and

(2) make contributions under AS 14.25.070.

\* **Sec. 12.** AS 14.25.043(f) is amended to read:

(f) If a member who retired under AS 14.25.110(a) is reemployed by a school district or regional resource center under AS 14.20.136,

(1) the member does not become an active member;

(2) the member shall continue to receive retirement benefits from the plan as though the member were not reemployed by the school district or regional resource center;

(3) deductions from the member's salary may not be made under AS 14.25.050; and

(4) the member may not receive credited service in the plan during the period of reemployment.

\* **Sec. 13.** AS 14.25.043(g) is amended to read:

(g) Notwithstanding (f) of this section, a member who is retired under AS 14.25.110(a) and reemployed by a school district or regional resource center under AS 14.20.136 is eligible to receive the group health plan coverage provided to active members employed by that school district or regional resource center.

\* **Sec. 14.** AS 14.30.773(a) is amended to read:

(a) A [SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION, A] school district is eligible to receive a reading proficiency incentive grant of not less than \$450 for each student in kindergarten through grade six who, at the end of the school year,

(1) performs at grade-level reading proficiency; or

(2) demonstrates improvement on a reading screening tool approved by the department, on a standards-based assessment in language arts approved by the department, or on a student portfolio in language arts approved by the department.

\* **Sec. 15.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE STUDY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING. The Legislative Budget and Audit Committee shall procure a study to be completed not later than January 1, 2027, by an entity or entities with expertise in school

1 finance to evaluate the current education funding provisions and either recommend changes to  
2 the current funding provisions or recommend alternative methods of education funding. The  
3 study must

4 (1) be produced in consultation with the Institute of Social and Economic  
5 Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage; and

6 (2) include consideration of

7 (A) stable and predictable funding for basic education needs and an  
8 ancillary system of providing funding above basic education needs;

9 (B) geographic location and specific student subpopulations, as  
10 appropriate;

11 (C) appropriate proportions and mechanisms for state and local  
12 contributions to public school funding; and

13 (D) methods for funding alternative public school options, including  
14 charter schools, residential schools, and correspondence programs.

15 \* **Sec. 16.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
16 read:

17 ONE-TIME SCHOOL ENERGY COST RELIEF PAYMENT. (a) Subject to  
18 appropriation, the Department of Education and Early Development shall distribute up to  
19 \$58,714 among school districts. A school district may use a distribution for any operating  
20 purpose. The amount the department distributes to a school district shall be proportional to the  
21 school district's share of total statewide reported energy expenditures. The department shall  
22 calculate the share by determining the quotient of the school district's actual expenditures for  
23 heating fuel and electricity for fiscal year 2025, as reflected in the Department of Education  
24 and Early Development's records, divided by the total actual expenditures of all school  
25 districts for heating fuel and electricity for fiscal year 2025, as reflected in the Department of  
26 Education and Early Development's records, multiplied by the total amount appropriated for  
27 payments under this section.

28 (b) The department shall distribute funds appropriated for payments under this section  
29 not later than 30 days after the funds become available.

30 \* **Sec. 17.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
31 read:

1           APPLICABILITY. Sections 8 - 13 of this Act apply to contracts made on or after the  
2 effective date of this Act.

3       \* **Sec. 18.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).