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Sectional Analysis for HB 343

*An Act relating to earning secondary school course credit through assessment;
and relating to a child's right to attend a public school.*

Section 1: AS 14.03.073(a): Course Challenge Opportunity

Amends subsection (a) of the course-challenge statute to make two technical but substantive changes:

- (1) Changes "the opportunity" to "an opportunity," clarifying that multiple challenge opportunities may be offered.
- (2) Changes the subject from "students" (plural) to "a student" (singular), shifting the framing from a group entitlement to an individual right. This aligns the language with the new individualized trigger added in Section 3.

The core substantive requirements remain: School districts must provide the opportunity at least three times per year or upon request of a parent or guardian, covering courses in mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, and world languages for students in grades 9–12.

Section 2: AS 14.03.073(d): Definitions

Amends the definitions subsection of AS 14.03.073 to add a definition of "guardian," cross-referencing AS 13.06.050 (the Uniform Probate Code). This ensures that the term "guardian" as used throughout the course-challenge statute, including the new provisions added by Section 3, has a consistent statutory meaning. The existing definition of "school district" (referencing AS 14.30.350) is retained.

Section 3: AS 14.03.073(e) and (f): Military Family Expedited Course Challenge

Section 3 is the central operative provision of HB 343. It adds two new subsections to the course-challenge statute to create an expedited process for students whose parent or guardian is an active-duty military member transferred to Alaska under official orders.

New Subsection (e):

Requires a school district to provide a qualifying student an opportunity to challenge courses within three weeks of the date the student begins attending school in the district. The three qualifying conditions are:

- (1) A parent or guardian serves as an active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces or a member of the National Guard;
- (2) The parent or guardian is transferred to a military installation in Alaska from outside the state under an official military order; and
- (3) That transfer results in the student's enrollment in the school district.

New Subsection (f):

Establishes a notification chain to ensure that qualifying families are timely informed of their course-challenge rights:

- (1) By end of the first business day after enrollment: the school district must notify the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) and provide notice to the parent or guardian of the student's course-challenge opportunity.
- (2) Within three business days of receiving that notice: DEED must also provide notice to the parent or guardian.
- (3) Notices may be delivered in either physical or electronic form.

Section 4: AS 14.03.080(e): Early Enrollment from DoDEA Programs

Amends the early enrollment provision of AS 14.03.080 to expand the circumstances under which a child under school age may be admitted to a public school district. Under current law, such a child may enroll if the child was previously legally enrolled in the public schools of another district or state. Section 4 adds a second qualifying pathway:

A child who was legally enrolled in a Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) program or other publicly funded kindergarten program at a military installation is also eligible for early enrollment.

This prevents a gap in educational continuity for military children who move to Alaska from DoDEA schools overseas or on stateside military installations and are otherwise below the state's minimum school age.

Section 5: AS 14.60.010(11): Definition of "Military Installation"

Adds a new definition of "military installation" to the general definitions section of Title 14 (Education). The definition encompasses any base, camp, post, station, yard, center, homeport facility for a ship, armory, or other installation under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. Coast Guard. This definition supports both the new early-enrollment pathway in Section 4 and the expedited course-challenge provisions in Section 3.

Section 6: AS 14.03.080(g)(2): Repeal

Repeals AS 14.03.080(g)(2). That subsection currently contains a definition of "military installation" within the early-enrollment statute. Because Section 5 moves a comprehensive version of this definition to AS 14.60.010, making it applicable throughout Title 14, the localized definition in AS 14.03.080(g)(2) becomes redundant and is therefore repealed to avoid duplication.