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**Senate Bill 151 School District Head Lice Policy**

**Version H Sponsor Statement**

**March 31, 2025**

The goal of Senate Bill 151 is to prevent lice from being spread in Alaska's schools and eradicate them when they occur. Having school nurses present with students at school is essential to providing education to students and families about lice prevention. Nurses also provide for other physical needs of students so that they can learn more effectively.

When a child gets lice, it creates an immense amount of work for parents to treat their child's hair and the surfaces in a home where lice can live. This extra work and stress on families is preventable. The Legislature can empower our elementary and middle schools with nurses to support families in killing lice and better yet, preventing lice from living in kids' hair altogether.

If you've ever bent down to help a student with their work and seen lice crawling through hair inches from your face, you may understand the primal reptilian reaction about lice and why feelings about lice are rather...touchy. It is past time for schools to revert to the standard of no live lice at school.

This bill will make it the practice of public schools in Alaska that students cannot attend school with live lice. It will also facilitate lice prevention and assist in treating lice. SB 151 will encourage school districts to check a vast majority of students for lice by October 15 in a manner that protects the student's privacy. When a school district submits a report to the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) describing their lice education, prevention, eradication protocol, and number of students that were found to have live lice, DEED will reimburse districts 20 percent of the cost to employ a nurse at a school that includes grade K-8.