

LEGAL SERVICES

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MEMORANDUM

February 27, 2009

SUBJECT: Sectional Summary of SB 109 (Work Order No. 26-LS0527\A)

TO: Senator Bettye Davis
Attn: Thomas Obermeyer

FROM: Jean M. Mischel
Legislative Counsel 

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

Section 1. Deletes the high school competency examination reference in the Department of Education and Early Development's annual report to the legislature.

Section 2. Deletes the high school competency examination reference in the Department of Education and Early Development's annual report to the public on school performance.

Section 3. Deletes the high school competency examination reference in the Department of Education and Early Development's school accountability system.

Section 4. Deletes the high school competency examination reference in the charter school operational requirements.

Section 5. Repeals the high school competency test requirements.

Section 6. Provides a July 1, 2011, effective date.

JMM:ljw
09-124.ljw

Moore v. Alaska, decision 6-21-07

RE: HSGQE – Exit Exam

p. 33 # 81. “This reform was a reaction by the legislature to frustration that children were receiving high school diplomas but were lacking in basic skills.”

p.34 #83. “State acknowledges that ‘children have a property interest in their prospective diploma, and cannot be deprived of that property interest by a test that is unfair to them because they have not had notice of the content of the test.’”

p. 36 #92 ‘Bering Strait’s graduation rate has fallen significantly since 2002-2003, when it was 59.4%. This may be due to the introduction of the exit exam requirement since that date, but also may be due in part to the “Quality Schools” program in place there that allows students additional time to complete their studies past 12th grade.’”

p. 38 #95 “While the dropout rate may be some indication as to whether an educational program is meeting a student’s need, the evidence showed that not all students drop out because of low academic achievement. Family and work commitments, among other reasons, may also be factors.”

p.38 #96 “Some students drop out because they are unable to pass the exit exam.

p.56 #164 Mr. Morgan was concerned about the exit exam and the impact may have on students dropping out: “There’s so much focus to pass [the exit exam] and I think there’s more to life than just passing the exist exam.”

p. 56 #165 Mr. Morgan ... had classes in photography, foreign languages and pottery, which have not been available to his children. He also believes there were more teachers. And he remembered that everyone graduated then. Now, he is ‘saddened by the kid who [does not] get the diploma but still walks.

p. 72. #226 “Dr. Davis (BSSD) testified that small schools in Alaska should not be expected to offer all of the course available in large schools. Instead, his position is that “we should offer an adequate education.”

p. 72. #229 Dr. Davis defines an adequate education as an “education that gives young people the tools to succeed in whatever live they choose.” He testified that BSSD students are receiving an adequate education due in part to supplemental activities and education from families. He does not think they meet state standards but they are successful based on their own standards and the improvements they have made.

p. 77. Note: Bering Strait School District has some of the highest paid teachers and highest funding per student (Kuspuk School District: received \$21,758 per student in 2005).

p. 79 #246 Dr. Laster testified that “we are in good faith really working to try to get those core competencies to students: reading, writing and math. But it’s really important to have an interdisciplinary approach; an approach that respect the community that kids come from, the culture that they come from, that engages them in a way that grabs them and engages them and has them working on stuff that that is rally meaningful to them.”