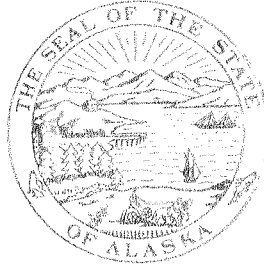


SESSION ADDRESS:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-4925
Fax: (907) 465-3517
Toll Free: 1-800-821-4925

Senator Gary Stevens

Alaska State Legislature

INTERIM ADDRESS:
305 Center Ave, Ste. 1
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
(907) 486-4925
Fax: (907) 486-5264



SPONSOR STATEMENT

SENATE BILL 111

Version: 28-LS1113/U

January 25, 2014

"An Act repealing the secondary student competency examination and related requirements; and providing for an effective date."

Senate Bill 111 repeals the Alaska Secondary student competency examination, also known as the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) or "Exit Exam."

The HSGQE was initiated in 2001 and became fully effective in 2004, following federal pressure for more assessment requirements in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It was never clear that the Alaska HSGQE would improve performance and measure whether students would be better prepared for college or a career. There has also persisted the question of why so many high school students, having passed the HSGQE and received a high school diploma, are nonetheless requiring remedial math and writing coursework in our university system.

The HSGQE has become a high stakes hurdle harming many Alaskan students. It costs millions of dollars and significant man-hours to administer, and removes students from 6 days of time in the classroom. It causes anxiety in those that fail. It signals to 10th graders who pass that they no longer need to work hard to graduate. It has run its course. We tried it, but it doesn't do what it was intended. Meanwhile we have a whole new accountability system in place, along with new Alaska Academic Standards being implemented and accompanying assessments aligned to those new standards. It no longer makes sense to continue funding and executing the exit exam.

The latest version of this bill (version U) phases out the exit exam to allow students who failed the exam prior to July 1, 2014 an opportunity to pass it before it is discontinued entirely. The window to retake the exam would close on June 30, 2017.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.