

Summary

Free Conference Committee CS for HB 278 Version \J - - Education

(By subject, with references to the applicable sections in Free Conference CS for HB 278, Version \J. Does not include strictly conforming changes)

Funding / Financial

School construction debt	Maintains current state debt contribution at 70% state, 30% local. Changes the grant cost share from 60% state, 40% local, to 50/50 (Section 21).
Voluntary local contribution	In determining the maximum, voluntary local contribution, the district is to include funding distributed outside the BSA (Section 24).
BSA Increase	Increases the BSA \$150 in 2014, to \$5,830; another \$50 in 2015, to \$5,880; and another \$50 in 2016, to \$5,930 (Sections 27, 28 and 29).
Funding outside BSA	Provides additional funding for schools outside of the BSA; this money will be distributed as if part of the BSA. Additional amounts are \$42,953,500 in 2015; \$32,243,700 in 2016; and \$19,904,200 in 2017, for a three-year total of \$95,101,400 (Section 55).
Education Tax credits	Expands existing education tax credits to include contributions to public or private nonprofit elementary and secondary schools; to on-campus room and board at post-secondary institutions offering dual-credit courses; construction, operation and maintenance of a residential school housing facility; early childhood learning programs by a nonprofit, tribal entity, or school district; science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs provided by a nonprofit or school district, for school staff and students in K-12; courses, programs, equipment and facilities for vocational RTC and apprenticeship programs; and nonprofits providing educational opportunities promoting legacy of public service. Clarifies credits can only be made for contributions to instate schools (Sections 36-47).

Charter schools

Applications and appeals	Re-writes the charter school application process and establishes a process for appeals (Sections 9 and 10; Section 56 provides transition language to accommodate current applications).
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After receiving a charter school application, the local school board must issue a decision in writing within 60 days approving or denying the application. If approved, the application is forwarded to the state Board of Education and DEED for approval.

If denied, the application can be appealed to the commissioner within 30 days. The commissioner can remand the matter to the local school board for further review; approve and forward the application to the BOE; or uphold the denial. The application can further appeal to the state BOE, which must decide on the matter within 90 days.

If approved at any stage in the process, the local school board must operate the charter school.

Leases / property tax

Charter schools get first right of refusal on school district space. Lease agreements can be only for true operating costs (Section 12).

A municipality can exempt or partially exempt from taxes private property being used for a charter school (Section 35).

Charter school budgets

In providing an annual program budget for a charter school, the local district can charge no more than 4% in administrative costs. Certain items related to facilities (rent, utilities, maintenance) may not be included in calculating the 4% cap. The amount generated by a student in a charter school must include other funds, such as grants, federal oil, and local contributions. The local district has to direct state facilities money allocated to a charter school to the charter school on the same conditions that apply to construction and major maintenance aid for traditional schools (Section 13).

Provides initial funding boost to charter schools by decreasing the minimum number of students required to establish the funding rate for a school over the first three years. This is done by allowing the adjusted student count to be the same rate as for 150 students (Section 26).

Charter school grants

Provides a one-time, \$500 per student grant to new charter schools, to be used for educational purposes only (Section 14).

Pupil Transportation

Districts must provide transportation to charter school students. If the district fails to adopt a policy doing so, the district must allocate the transportation money received for each charter school student to the charter school. Districts do not have to establish special routes for the exclusive use of charter students, and charter schools cannot opt out of

a district transportation policy in order to access the transportation funding per student (Section 20).

Other schools

Residential schools	<p>School districts can apply to DEED to establish a statewide or district-wide residential school. DEED must hold an annual open application period, but is not required to approve a new school (Section 22).</p> <p>Increases the per-pupil monthly room and board stipend to residential schools in all 5 areas of the state to reflect actual operating costs (Section 23).</p>
Correspondence study	<p>Increases state funding for correspondence study by moving the factor to 90% of the BSA, up from the current 80% (Section 25).</p> <p>Requires districts with correspondence programs to provide individual learning plans annually for each student, developed in collaboration with the student's parents or guardian and others. Allows districts to provide an annual allotment to the parents or guardians of a correspondence student to help meet educational expenses, such as textbooks. Remaining funds at the end of a year may be rolled into the next year for the same student (Section 15).</p>

Special Programs

Funding for Internet Services	<p>Provides funding to bring an eligible school's internet speed up to 10 megabits (Section 8).</p>
Pilot program ANSEP	<p>Authorizes a pilot project by Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program to expand science, technology, engineering and math education to underserved middle school students. The pilot project terminates June 30, 2017 (Section 48).</p>
TVEP	<p>Increases the employee contribution to the Technical and Vocational Education Program account from .15% to .16% (Section 30).</p> <p>Extends the TVEP sunset date from June 30, 2014, to June 30, 2017; corrects the names of recipient organizations; removes University of Alaska Southeast as a named recipient at 5%; and adds Ilisagvik College as a named recipient at 5% (Section 31).</p>

Deletes a satisfaction survey requirement and instead adds a performance review (Section 32).

Requires that institutions receiving TVEP funding must have an articulation agreement for dual credit for high school students, and assesses a 20% penalty for failure to do so (Section 33). Defines articulation agreement and dual credit (Section 34).

Miscellaneous

Jury Duty for teachers	Changes language in a jury duty exemption to conform to state, rather than federal, law. The exemption remains the same as in current statute, providing that a teacher from a low performing school is exempt from jury duty during the school year (Section 1).
Course credit	<p>Allows secondary school students to earn credit for core courses (science, math, language arts, social studies and world languages) by passing a mastery exam (Section 2).</p> <p>Boarding schools are required to allow course credit by mastery through a definition change (Section 1).</p>
Exit Exam	<p>Replaces the existing exit exam with a requirement to take SAT, ACT, or WorkKeys. The state would fund one exam per student. A student who fails the test receives a certificate of achievement instead of a high school diploma. A student may apply for a waiver (Section 3).</p> <p>Allows retroactive diplomas for prior students who completed all other graduation requirements, but did not pass the exit exam (Section 49).</p> <p>Exit exam requirements are also repealed for charter school students; charter students are subject to the new requirement (Section 11).</p>
DEED Annual Report	Cleans up language in an existing reporting requirement (Section 4).
DEED Duties	Substitutes the term “language arts” for “reading, writing”; prohibits DEED from spending money on Common Core Standards implementation for K-12 (Section 17).
State Autonomy	Reaffirms state autonomy by prohibiting the state from ceding control over education standards and assessment (Section 5).

School Performance	Substitutes the term “language arts” for reading and writing. Requires a report on attendance and academic performance by students whose parents are active duty military (Section 6).
Board of Education duties	Makes some technical language changes; requires the board, in conjunction with the college and career readiness test requirement, to provide for a child with a disability and to establish a waiver process (Sections 18 and 19).
Studies	Orders several new studies to provide legislators with necessary information to make future policy decisions related to education. Department of Administration is to prepare a proposal related to statewide school district salaries and benefits by June 15, 2015; this report is to include a review of tenure (Section 52). A report detailing the use of prototypes in school design and construction is due June 15, 2015, by DEED (Section 53). Legislative Budget and Audit Committee is to procure expert consultants for two studies; one to evaluate the state’s education funding systems and recommend changes or an alternative model, and one to provide updated data for the existing system. Both are due June 15, 2015 (Section 54).