

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

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Summary of Changes, version S to version F

HB 157 – Language Immersion Schools/Teacher Certifications

Section 2

Subsection (e) has been added, which makes explicit that a language immersion charter school shall hold its students to the same state performance standards as students at any other public school, including standards for English, math, and other subjects.

Slight changes in language have been made to paragraph (f)(3) to conform with changes to section 7.

Section 3

The title of the section has been amended by the drafter.

Paragraph (a)(3) has been amended to provide the Board of Education (“Board”) the explicit authority to define in regulation how a person can meet language proficiency standards.

Paragraph (a)(4) has been amended to eliminate the costs associated with the Department of Education and Early Development (“Department”) approving language immersion teacher preparation programs. In the new version F, a course or program of study meets the requirements of the paragraph if one can earn college credit for the program.

Section 4

Language has been added that allows the academic policy committee of a charter school to request a limited teacher certificate for teachers of military science, Alaska Native culture, or vocational or technical courses.

Section 5

Subsection (b) has been amended to allow the academic policy committee of a charter school to request extension of a limited certificate issued under Section 4. This is to conform section 5 to the changes in section 4.

Subsection (b) has been amended to remove the requirement that extensions of limited certificates be for exactly four years.

The last word of subsection (b) has been changed from “department” to “board” to correct a drafting error.

Section 6

Subsection (a) has been amended to remove the requirement that the Board of Education specifically define in regulation the languages for which there is an insufficient number of certified teachers in the state.

Subsection (a) has been amended to allow any charter school, not just a language immersion charter school, to request a limited teacher certificate for language immersion. This conforms section 6 with the changes to section 4.

To clarify section 6, subsections (a) and (b) have been rearranged. The following substantive changes have been made:

- “The department shall issue” on pg 5, ln 12 of version S has been changed to “the department may issue” (found on pg 5, ln 23 in version F);
- A limited language certificate holder must demonstrate subject area expertise no matter what grade he or she is teaching (version S only required this demonstration if the teacher was teaching in grades four through eight);
- New sub-paragraph (a)(2)(B) has been amended to eliminate the costs associated with the Department approving language immersion teacher preparation programs;
- New paragraph (b)(2) has been amended to state that a non-English speaker may not be required to demonstrate subject matter expertise by taking an English language test, and that a person may not be required to hold a specific degree in order to demonstrate subject matter expertise; and
- New paragraph (b)(3) addresses a concern of the Department by giving the Board the authority to set standards for language proficiency in regulation.

Subsection (c) is amended to remove the requirement that extensions of limited certificates be for exactly four years.

The last word of subsection (c) has been changed from “department” to “board” to correct a drafting error.

Section 7

Section 7 has been amended and reorganized to reduce costs to the Department, strengthen criminal background checks, and clarify the structure of the tribal teacher certificate program.

Subsection (a) has been rearranged but makes no substantive changes. Similarly worded language appeared in subsection (b) and paragraph (a)(3) of version S.

Sub-paragraph (b)(1)(A) has been amended to clarify the intent that the language proficiency evaluation must evaluate proficiency in the language historically spoken by the Alaska Native tribe.

Small drafting changes have been made to sub-paragraph (b)(1)(B).

Paragraph (b)(2) strengthens the language in version S by requiring the tribe to submit a “complete” description of its certification program to the Department.

Paragraph (b)(3) is added to ensure the Department can keep track of teachers certified by tribes.

Subsection (c) requires that the program description submitted under (b)(2) be publicly available.

Subsection (d) is strengthened by borrowing language from AS 14.20.022(b)(2) to ensure teachers certified by a tribe are subject to the same criminal history review as all other certified teachers.

Subsection (e) is added to give the Department authority to prohibit graduates of a tribal certificate program from teaching in public schools if the program does not meet the requirements of the section.

Section 8 (ver S)

Section 8 from version S, related to standardized tests, has been deleted.

Section 8 (ver F)

A new section 8 gives the commissioner of the Department or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission the authority to prohibit a teacher certified by a tribe from teaching in a public school for the same reasons that any other teacher could have their teaching certificate suspended or revoked under AS 14.20.030.

Section 9

Section 9 has been added to describe the administrative review procedures available to tribes and teachers certified by tribes in the case that the Department or the Professional Teaching Practices Commission prohibits the use of a tribal certificate in public schools.

Section 10

Section 10 has been added to provide for a transition period from the current limited teacher certificate statutes to the new limited teacher certificate statutes. This section is only relevant to limited certificates for teaching Alaska Native languages.