

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SPONSOR STATEMENT

Senate Committee Substitute for CS for House Bill 44 () Version G

Senate Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill 44 (), Version G, addresses several issues facing Alaska local school districts today. This legislation incorporates three education bills considered during the regular legislative session into House Bill 44, relating to sexual abuse and assault training and prevention programs. The education bills included in this committee substitute are as follows:

- HB 44 – Sexual Abuse/Assault/Dating Violence Prevention Programs
- HB 80 – Repeal College/Career Readiness Assessments
- SB 89 – Parent Rights: Education, School Absence
- SB 102 – Unfunded Mandates; Education Training; Teachers (portions of)

Topic One

The main focus of the committee substitute is Alaska's high rate of sexual abuse and assault and the increasing rate of dating violence. The bill provides an age-appropriate framework for a sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program for K-12 students. Through discussions within each local community, school boards MAY adopt and implement the programs outlined in the bill.

For students in grades seven through 12, the committee substitute provides a framework for a training program that emphasizes prevention and awareness of dating violence that school boards MAY elect to adopt and implement.

If a school board offers the training and prevention programs, a procedure must be in place that allows a student to be excused from participating from this class activity.

Topic Two

The committee substitute repeals the requirement that each high school student must take a college and career readiness assessment (ACT, SAT, or WorkKeys) to receive a diploma. This requirement has proven to be very costly to both local school districts and the State of Alaska.

Topic Three

The committee substitutes codifies in state statute the inherent right of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children. Under this legislation, local school boards shall, working with parents, teachers, and school administrators, adopt policies to promote the involvement of parents in the education programs for their children.

The adopted policy must allow parents to withdraw their student from a standards-based assessment and any activity, class or program that involves sexual matters or inquiries into personal or private family affairs. A student may also miss an activity, class, or program for a religious holiday, as defined by the parent.

Under the committee substitute, a school district and an educational services organization that has a contract with a school district may not contract with an abortion services provider. In addition, a school district may not permit an abortion services provider to offer, sponsor, or furnish course materials or instruction related to human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases.

Topic Four

The committee substitute allows school districts flexibility in scheduling required educator training by offering training every five years on a staggered schedule, unless it is determined by the district a more frequent schedule is necessary. The legislation also clarifies that only students in grades 9 - 12 can challenge courses for credit and school districts do not have to establish tests for all courses offered in grades 9 - 12 for the purpose of challenging a course.

This legislation repeals the current requirement that school districts must require a physical examination of every child when the child enters school. The Department of Health and Social Services may require a district to conduct examinations when necessary and may reimburse the district for the cost of the examinations. The committee substitute allows the Department of Education and Early Development's fingerprint records for a certificated teacher to be used for employment at a child care facility, under certain circumstances.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this legislation.