

SB79 Virtual Ed / Teacher Exam / Course Exam Sponsored by Sen. Hughes
Education Transformation Act
Summary Points

Every Alaskan student matters and deserves a high quality education. The goal of this bill is to improve the academic outcomes for our students. Included in the bill are the following provisions:

- **VIRTUAL EDUCATION** Creates virtual education consortium in the department to allow students statewide to take online classes offered by other school districts. Gives districts the option to join the consortium. The consortium will maintain a database/menu of course offerings with course descriptions, video introductions of teachers, video instruction samples, and curriculum samples. Teachers will have access to virtual teaching training and professional development courses. Allows a district to charge for a course offered. Districts that join the consortium will be assessed a fee to support the operations of the consortium.
- **COURSE CREDIT FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES** Allow students to receive credit for activities outside of school for career and technical education, physical education, art, and music, including for cultural activities, if the activities meet the district course requirements.
- **RAISED BAR FOR TEACHER CERTIFICATION** Requires teacher certification test scores to be increased when they are lower than other states.
- **RATIO REPORTING** Requires each school district to report annually on ratio of administrative employees to teachers to students to the department and to a district's local community. Requires the department to report these ratios to the legislature.
- **ROLLOVER SAVINGS LIMIT INCREASE** Increases school district fund balance cap from 10% of operating costs to 25% to encourage efficiency improvements. Savings derived from cooperative agreements are outside the 25% cap for first three years.
- **CONSOLIDATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT IN DEPARTMENT** Consolidates the administrative support for the Professional Teaching Practices Commission into the department.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

- Virtual education working group: remove specificity of consortium in bill and require commissioner to convene working group to determine its structure, how it will function, district participation, any teacher training requirements, class fee methodology, etc.
- Praxis adjustments to occur every 3 years rather than "periodically" as currently stated in bill.
- Insertion of "classroom" prior to "teacher" in ratio language. Inclusion of classroom teacher definition.
- Read by nine language – early child literacy. (Will reduce achievement gaps and social promotion.)
- New method for acquiring student count for BSA calculation: instead of average daily attendance for dates in October, use average daily attendance for school year. (Will decrease absenteeism)
- Expanded cooperative agreement language to include shared services and partnerships with other districts, other government agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations. (Will free up dollars for classrooms.)