

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

SENATE BILL 79 (Version S)

Education Transformation Act

- Sec. 1-2: AS 14.03.073 (a-b) The first two sections are technical amendments to existing statute regarding challenging courses for core credit in math, sciences, language arts, etc, setting things up for section 3 below.
- Sec. 3: AS 14.03.073 (e) Recognizes credit for extra curricular activities of students, adding a new requirement for school districts to allow course credit for career and technical education, physical education, music, or art classes for an activity, including a cultural activity, outside of school hours.
- Sec. 4: AS 14.03.078 (a) amends the existing Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) annual reporting requirements to include a categorized summary of administrative and teaching staff within each school district. The new requirements also include reporting the following ratios for each school district:
- Administrators : Students
 - Administrators : Teachers
 - Teachers : Students
- Sec. 5: AS 14.03.078 (c) Adds additional reporting requirements that school districts must post in prominent locations around the district, including on their websites, the ratios reported under subsection (a), described above in section 4.
- (d) provides definitions for:
- (1) An “administrative employee” as “an employee who does not provide direct classroom instruction for students as a regular part” of their job; and
 - (2) “classroom teacher” as being certificated, instructing students, preparing course outlines, assigning work, administering and grading exams, maintaining classroom order, and communicating student progress with parents.

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SECTIONAL ANALYSIS – SB 79 (version S) *Continued*

- Sec. 6: AS 14.14.115 (a) regards Cooperative Arrangement Grants (CAGs) issued by the department when districts find efficiencies by sharing administrative or educational services with other districts. This section is amended to expand CAGs to include not only district to district cooperations, but also between districts and businesses, non-profits, and other state government agencies. It also increases the CAG cap from \$100,000 to \$200,000.
- Sec. 7: AS 14.14.115 (d) adds new requirements for CAG eligibility, including that if two school districts enter into a cooperative grant, at least one must be a rural district.
- (e) establishes that if a cooperative grant is used for health insurance pooling with the State, the grant can only be used to pay for the costs of transferring district employees to the State insurance plan, not for the cost of participating in the new insurance policy;
 - (f) allows a school district to carry forward the savings realized by a CAG during the first three years after the grant is awarded. The savings will not be counted towards the fund balance limit established in AS 14.17.505(a) [Section 8 below];
 - (g) defines “rural school district” consistent with use of the term elsewhere in statute, and defined in AS 14.11.025(c).
- Sec. 8: AS 14.17.505(a) is amended to increase the maximum cap of a district’s unreserved (“emergency”) fund balance from 10% to 15% of its operating budget, and allows an additional amount to be reserved related to CAGs described above in section 7.
- Sec. 9: AS 14.20.020 (i) is amended to describe a regimented process for the state board to evaluate and adjust minimum passing scores on required competency exams for persons to qualify for teacher certification.
- Sec. 10: AS 14.20.380 (b) adds a requirement for DEED to provide administrative support services to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC).
- Sec. 11: AS 14.20.460 (5) adds a duty for the PTPC to reduce its administrative costs by accepting support services from DEED.

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SECTIONAL ANALYSIS – SB 79 (version S) *Continued*

- Sec. 12: AS 14.30.760 - A new article 15 is created describing the Virtual Education Consortium.
- (a) DEED shall establish and maintain a database of virtual education courses available to all districts, students, and teachers.
 - (b) Requires the consortium to provide training and professional development for teachers facilitating courses offered through the consortium.
 - (c) DEED may require a fee paid by school districts making use of the consortium, determined in regulation and limited to a prorated consideration of the costs associated with maintaining the consortium.
 - (d) Allows the consortium to require districts that provide courses or have students taking courses through the consortium to adopt a shared calendar and a shared bell schedule for at least a portion of the school day.
 - (e) Provides a definition for “virtual education” or “virtual instruction” as that delivered through telecommunications or the internet.
- Sec. 13: AS 14.30.775 is a new Article 16 describing the District Reading Intervention Program (RIP).
- (a) Each district shall establish a RIP for students in grade K-3 to ensure students struggling with reading can read at or above grade level by the end of grade 3.
 - 1. Students will be screened once in the Fall, Winter, and Spring;
 - 2. Establish a plan and procedures to intervene for students identified as struggling with reading;
 - 3. Implement the plan during regular school hours through any available method.
 - (b) Within 15 days notify, and then regularly update the parents of students identified as struggling with reading, and include a description and progress of the plan being developed to assist the student’s improvement;
 - (c) Details the manner in which districts must provide intensive reading services and monitor student progress toward grade level reading;
 - (d) Districts must offer an intensive acceleration class that is of small size and accounts for most of a student’s contact time each school day.
 - (e) Each district must submit an annual report to DEED detailing the number of students who have needed to participate in a RIP and their progress toward reading proficiency.
 - (f) DEED shall approve of a universal screening tool to assess student reading levels, and in turn report annually on statewide reading proficiency in grades K-3.

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SECTIONAL ANALYSIS – SB 79 (version S) *Continued*

- Sec. 14: Establishes a temporary Virtual Education Task Force, led by the Commissioner of DEED, and comprised of leaders in education technology, to assemble one year prior to the effective date of the bill, who are charged with developing the initial structure and functionality of the Virtual Education Consortium described in Section 12 of the bill.
- Sec. 15: Sections 4 – 11 have immediate effective dates.
- Sec. 16: Overall effective date of July 1, 2020.