

Tim Lamkin

From: Lizzie Thompson <thompsonthree@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2020 3:55 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SSSB 6

Dear Committee,

Please do not support this version of SSB 6.

Among other things, this proposed law, if passed in its current form, would require three reading tests annually for K-3 students. It could also affect parent choice by mandating a specific reading curriculum for students in grades K-3. It would also set minimum reading performance standards that students would have to meet in order to be promoted from third to fourth grade. In summary, this would mean that from kindergarten to third grade a child may have to use curriculum chosen by the Alaska Department of Education, take three reading tests a year and if a third grade child was unable to pass a Department of Education mandated reading test at the end of their third grade year, or meet one of the exemptions, this proposed bill mandates that the child be retained in the third grade.

While no one debates the importance of student literacy, I have grave concerns about the potential for mandated “one size fits all” curriculum chosen by the state, more mandated testing as well as forced retention for students who have not yet mastered whatever arbitrary performance standards are put in place. We know that not every child learns in the same way at the same speed and that schools should be able to pick the curriculum and the methods of instruction that are individualized to best meet the needs of each child. We also know that most children who experience a delay in reading will eventually catch their peers if consistently taught and supported—using any number of curricular choices.

Elizabeth Thompson

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