

HOUSE BILL NO. 173

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE TARR

Introduced: 4/14/21

Referred: Education, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to state education policy; relating to school climate and connectedness;**
2 **establishing the School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Committee;**
3 **and providing for an effective date."**

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
6 to read:

7 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the School Climate and School
8 Connectedness Improvement Act.

9 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.015 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

10 (b) It is the policy of the state to acknowledge and take into account the
11 principles of early childhood and youth brain development and, whenever possible,
12 consider the concepts of early adversity, toxic stress, childhood trauma, and the
13 promotion of resilience through protective relationships, supports, self-regulation, and
14 services.

1 * **Sec. 3.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
2 read:

3 SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS IMPROVEMENT
4 COMMITTEE. (a) The School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Committee
5 is established as an advisory committee in the Department of Education and Early
6 Development.

7 (b) The committee consists of the following members appointed by the governor:

8 (1) two current school superintendents;

9 (2) two retired school superintendents;

10 (3) three current K-12 teachers;

11 (4) three retired K-12 teachers;

12 (5) four parents of K-12 students;

13 (6) one representative from the division in the Department of Health and
14 Social Services with jurisdiction over juvenile justice who is involved in direct youth services;

15 (7) two school social workers;

16 (8) two school counselors.

17 (c) When appointing committee members, the governor shall consider

18 (1) geographic representation and appoint not fewer than six members who
19 reside in communities that are rural, as defined in AS 14.43.700; and

20 (2) representation across grade levels, appointing at least one current or retired
21 teacher of students in each of the following:

22 (A) kindergarten through grade two;

23 (B) grades three through five;

24 (C) grades six through eight; and

25 (D) grades nine through twelve.

26 (d) Committee members serve without compensation and are not entitled to per diem.

27 (e) The committee shall meet at least once a year. Meetings may be held by audio or
28 video teleconference.

29 (f) The committee shall organize regional and subject-matter subcommittees to
30 address the specific needs of English language learners, vocational and technical education,
31 special education, student athletes, and other subject matter the committee considers

1 necessary.

2 * **Sec. 4.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
3 read:

4 DISTRICT SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS PLANS. (a)
5 Each school district shall develop a school climate and school connectedness plan to improve
6 student, staff, and family relationships and establish connections and partnerships between
7 district schools and local communities. The School Climate and School Connectedness
8 Improvement Committee shall support districts in plan development and implementation.

9 (b) A district shall designate district representatives to coordinate with the committee
10 and draft the district's plan. The plan must identify actions the district will take to improve
11 school climate and school connectedness.

12 (c) A plan may incorporate use of

- 13 (1) social and emotional learning;
14 (2) trauma-informed and healing-centered practices;
15 (3) instruction in cultural competence and alignment with indigenous values;
16 (4) multi-tiered support for behavioral intervention, including restorative
17 practices that are nonshaming, nonpunitive, and effective in addressing conflict and repairing
18 relationships;
19 (5) methods for reducing racial disparities, disproportionate behavior
20 responses, and suspensions or expulsions.

21 * **Sec. 5.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
22 read:

23 PLAN SUBMISSION. On or before January 1, 2023, each school district shall submit
24 a school climate and school connectedness plan to the commissioner of education and early
25 development, the senate secretary, and the chief clerk of the house of representatives and
26 notify the legislature that the plan is available.

27 * **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 and 3 - 5 of this Act are repealed July 1, 2023.

28 * **Sec. 7.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2021.