



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

House Bill 173

“School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Act”

Sectional Analysis

Section 1: States the bill may be known as the School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Act.

Section 2: Amends AS 14.03.015, with a new subsection, AS 14.03.015 (b). This subsection states that the state’s education policy will consider principles of early childhood and youth brain development, in addition to considering concepts such as early adversity, toxic stress, childhood trauma, and the promotion of resilience when possible.

Section 3: Creates an advisory School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Committee under the Department of Education and Early Development. This committee will consist of 2 current and 2 retired school superintendents, 3 current and 3 retired K-12 teachers, 4 parents of K-12 students, 1 representative from the Department of Health and Social Services, 2 school social workers, and 2 school counselors. These members will be appointed by the governor and will require representation across rural and non-rural communities, as well as representation across grade levels. The committee will also be able to establish sub-committees on various topics, including English language learners, special education, student athletes, vocational education, and any other topics as deemed necessary by the committee.

Section 4: Requires school districts to develop school climate and school connectedness improvement plans with support from the statewide School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Committee. This section also provides guidance for concepts that can be included in the districts’ school climate and school connectedness plans.

Section 5: Requires that school districts submit their school climate and school connectedness improvement plans to the commissioner of education and early development, the senate secretary, and the chief clerk of the house of representatives on or before January 1, 2023.

Section 6: Repeals sections 1, 3, 4, and 5 on July 1, 2023.

Section 7: Establishes the effective date as July 1, 2021.