

32-LS0731\G  
Klein  
6/18/21

**CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 164(EDC)**

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**

**THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

**BY THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Offered:  
Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES TUCK, Drummond, Story**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 "An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development;  
2 relating to reading; relating to public schools and school districts; relating to early  
3 education programs; relating to funding for early education programs; relating to  
4 school age eligibility; relating to reports by the Department of Education and Early  
5 Development; relating to reports by school districts; relating to certification and  
6 competency of teachers; relating to assessing reading deficiencies and providing reading  
7 intervention services to public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through  
8 three; relating to textbooks and materials for reading intervention services; establishing  
9 a reading program in the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to  
10 school operating funds; relating to a virtual education library; and providing for an  
11 effective date."

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

1     \* **Section 1.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section  
2 to read:

3             **SHORT TITLE.** This Act may be known as the Alaska Reads Act.

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

6             **LEGISLATIVE INTENT.** The Alaska State Legislature recognizes and affirms the  
7 right of students to learn to read in multiple languages and recognizes that locally designed,  
8 culturally responsive reading curricula nurture a student's unique cultural strengths to promote  
9 academic achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's place in the world.  
10 Nothing in this Act limits a school district's ability to offer or focus on literacy education in  
11 multiple languages.

12     \* **Sec. 3.** AS 14.03.040 is amended to read:

13             **Sec. 14.03.040. Day in session.** Each day within the school term is a day in  
14 session except Saturdays, Sundays, and days designated as holidays by or according to  
15 AS 14.03.050. A school board may approve Saturdays as a day in session. The day in  
16 session in every school shall be at least four hours long, exclusive of intermissions, for  
17 the first, second, and third grades and five hours, exclusive of intermissions, for [ALL  
18 OTHER] grades four through 12. The commissioner may approve a shorter day in  
19 session for any grade. The period of the day in session shall be devoted to the  
20 instruction of pupils or to study periods for the pupils.

21     \* **Sec. 4.** AS 14.03.060(e) is amended to read:

22             (e) In addition to the grades enumerated in (a) of this section, an elementary  
23 school consists of an early education [A PRE-ELEMENTARY] program approved  
24 or supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8), including a program  
25 operated by a head start agency [THE DEPARTMENT] as a head start program  
26 under 42 U.S.C. 9831 - 9852c [AS 14.38.010, OR LOCATED IN A PUBLIC  
27 SCHOOL FOR FEDERAL FUNDING PURPOSES. EXCEPT FOR A CHILD WITH  
28 A DISABILITY WHO IS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION OR RELATED  
29 SERVICES UNDER AS 14.30.180 - 14.30.350, PRE-ELEMENTARY STUDENTS  
30 MAY NOT BE COUNTED IN A SCHOOL'S AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP  
31 UNDER AS 14.17].

\* Sec. 5. AS 14.03.072(a) is amended to read:

(a) At the first parent-teacher conference of the school year, each [EACH] school district shall [ANNUALLY] provide to parents and guardians of students enrolled in kindergarten through grade three in a public school in the state current information on the importance of [EARLY] literacy and early reading, including

(1) culturally responsive intervention strategies and reading intervention services provided under AS 14.30.765;

(2) home reading [LITERACY] plans;

(3) grade progression [RETENTION] standards and policies for the elementary school attended;

(4) strategies and resources to help children learn to read;

(5) a list of online and geographically accessible resources and organizations that specialize in improving adult literacy;

(6) the role of social and emotional learning in a child's development and lifelong success.

\* Sec. 6. AS 14.03.078(a) is amended to read:

(a) The department shall employ a data analyst and provide to the legislature and school districts by February 15 of each year by electronic means an annual report regarding the progress of each school and school district toward high academic performance by all students. The report required under this section must include

(1) information described under AS 14.03.120 [AS 14.03.120(d)];

(2) progress of the department

(A) toward implementing the school accountability provisions of AS 14.03.123; and

(B) in assisting high schools to become accredited;

(3) a description of the resources provided to each school and school district for coordinated school improvement activities and staff training in each school and school district;

(4) each school district's and each school's progress in aligning curriculum with state education performance standards;

(5) a description of the efforts by the department to assist a public

1 school or district that receives a low performance designation under AS 14.03.123;

2 (6) a description of intervention efforts by each school district and  
3 school for students who are not meeting state performance standards; [AND]

4 (7) the number and percentage of turnover in certificated personnel and  
5 superintendents;

6 (8) the progress made to implement the reading intervention  
7 program provided under AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.785, including data on how school  
8 districts are using in-service training days for culturally responsive professional  
9 development in reading instruction; and

10 (9) the effectiveness and participation rates of the parents as  
11 teachers program established under AS 14.03.420.

12 \* Sec. 7. AS 14.03.080(c) is amended to read:

13 (c) A child under school age may be admitted to a public school and a child  
14 who is at least four years of age at the beginning of the school year may be  
15 admitted to an early education program in the school district of which the child is a  
16 resident at the discretion of the governing body of the school district if the child meets  
17 minimum standards prescribed by the board evidencing that the child has the mental,  
18 physical, and emotional capacity to perform satisfactorily for the educational program  
19 being offered. A district's educational program must prescribe that, except for  
20 students in an early education program, under school age students advance through  
21 the curriculum or grade level by the following school year. A governing body may  
22 delegate the authority granted under this subsection to the chief school administrator  
23 of the school district.

24 \* Sec. 8. AS 14.03.120 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

25 (h) To the extent allowable under state and federal privacy laws, each district  
26 shall annually report to the department information from the previous school year  
27 regarding

28 (1) the number of students and teaching staff assigned to each  
29 classroom in grades kindergarten through three;

30 (2) the number and percentage of students

31 (A) in grades kindergarten through three who demonstrated

improvement on expected grade-level skills on the statewide screening or assessment tool;

(B) in grades kindergarten through three who performed below expected grade-level skills on the statewide screening or assessment tool, by grade;

(C) in grades kindergarten through three who did not progress to the next grade and the reasons the students did not progress;

(D) in grade three who demonstrated sufficient reading skills to progress to grade four based on the statewide screening or assessment tool;

(E) in grade three who demonstrated sufficient reading skills to progress to grade four based on an alternative standardized reading screening or assessment;

(F) in grade three who demonstrated sufficient reading skills to progress to grade four based on a student reading portfolio;

(3) the performance on the statewide screening or assessment tool of students in a grade above grade three who did not progress to grade four or who progressed to grade four based on a parent's or guardian's decision under AS 14.30.765(d).

\* Sec. 9. AS 14.03 is amended by adding new sections to read:

#### **Article 4. Early Education.**

**Sec. 14.03.410. Early education programs; grants.** (a) The department shall provide training and assistance to develop and improve district-wide early education programs that comply with standards adopted by the board under AS 14.07.165(a)(5). The department shall assess district-wide early education programs and approve programs that comply with the standards adopted by the board under AS 14.07.165(a)(5). The department may review an approved program at any time and may revoke approval of a program if the program is not in compliance with the standards adopted by the board under AS 14.07.165(a)(5).

(b) The department may award a grant to provide funding for a three-year period for the development or improvement of a district-wide early education program to a district that has not received a grant under this section, applies in a format

1 prescribed by the department, and is eligible for a grant as specified under (c) of this  
2 section. Unless the legislature appropriates another amount, total grant funding  
3 awarded to districts under this subsection may not exceed \$3,000,000 in a fiscal year.

4 (c) The department shall rank the performance of each district in the state in  
5 accordance with the accountability system and performance designations required  
6 under AS 14.03.123. When approving grants under (b) of this section, the department  
7 shall prioritize eligible districts with lower performance, based on the department's  
8 ranking of districts under this subsection. A district is eligible for a grant if the  
9 department determines an insufficient number of children in the district attend high  
10 quality child care programs, including head start programs, early education programs  
11 provided by a local government, and early education programs provided by child  
12 development agencies, that

13 (1) meet or exceed the standards adopted by the board under  
14 AS 14.07.165(a)(5); and

15 (2) would continue operating after development of a district early  
16 education program.

17 (d) If the department does not approve, as provided in (a) of this section, the  
18 early education program of a district awarded a grant under (b) of this section by the  
19 end of the district's three-year grant period, the department may provide a one-year  
20 remediation grant to allow the district one additional fiscal year to meet the early  
21 education program standards adopted by the board under AS 14.07.165(a)(5). If the  
22 district is unable to meet the early education program standards at the end of that fiscal  
23 year, the department may, in the discretion of the commissioner, provide an additional  
24 remediation grant to allow the district not more than one additional fiscal year to meet  
25 the standards. Nothing in this section prohibits a district from using its own funds to  
26 continue the remediation process.

27 (e) A student in an early education program may not be counted in a district's  
28 ADM under AS 14.17.500 unless the department has approved the district's program  
29 under (a) of this section.

30 (f) A grant under this section is subject to appropriation, but may not supplant  
31 other early education funding available to districts.

1 (g) In this section,

2 (1) "ADM" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990;

3 (2) "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990;

4 (3) "early education program" means a program, the primary function  
5 of which is educational, for children who are four and five years of age and who have  
6 not attended a public school kindergarten.

7 **Sec. 14.03.420. Parents as teachers program.** (a) The department shall  
8 design and implement a statewide parents as teachers program for the benefit of  
9 children who are under five years of age. The program must provide a system of early  
10 childhood education that

11 (1) is evidence-based;

12 (2) involves parents or guardians;

13 (3) is consistent with available research and best practices for high  
14 quality early childhood education;

15 (4) incorporates guidelines adopted by the department for early  
16 learning that

17 (A) enhance school readiness;

18 (B) increase parent or guardian understanding of child  
19 development and developmental milestones;

20 (C) reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect;

21 (D) increase identification of health problems and  
22 developmental delays through regular screenings;

23 (E) improve child health indicators, including immunization  
24 rates; and

25 (F) increase parental or guardian involvement; and

26 (5) provides for effective and efficient coordination with or expansion  
27 of early education programs operating in the state, to the extent permitted by law.

28 (b) A school district shall, to the extent space is needed and available, provide  
29 for the use of a room in a school at no charge to support the program established under  
30 this section.

31 (c) The department shall develop and enter into local partnerships to

1 implement the program established under this section.

2 (d) In this section, "parent" includes a natural, adoptive, and foster parent,  
3 stepparent, legal guardian, relative, and other adult person with whom a student has  
4 resided and who has acted as a parent in providing for the student or has been  
5 responsible for the student's welfare for a continuous period.

6 \* Sec. 10. AS 14.07.020(a) is amended to read:

7 (a) The department shall

8 (1) exercise general supervision over the public schools of the state  
9 except the University of Alaska;

10 (2) study the conditions and needs of the public schools of the state,  
11 adopt or recommend plans, administer and evaluate grants to improve school  
12 performance awarded under AS 14.03.125, and adopt regulations for the improvement  
13 of the public schools; the department may consult with the University of Alaska to  
14 develop secondary education requirements to improve student achievement in college  
15 preparatory courses;

16 (3) provide advisory and consultative services to all public school  
17 governing bodies and personnel;

18 (4) prescribe by regulation a minimum course of study for the public  
19 schools; the regulations must provide that, if a course in American Sign Language is  
20 given, the course shall be given credit as a course in a foreign language;

21 (5) establish, in coordination with the Department of Health and Social  
22 Services, a program for the continuing education of children who are held in detention  
23 facilities in the state during the period of detention;

24 (6) accredit those public schools that meet accreditation standards  
25 prescribed by regulation by the department; these regulations shall be adopted by the  
26 department and presented to the legislature during the first 10 days of any regular  
27 session, and become effective 45 days after presentation or at the end of the session,  
28 whichever is earlier, unless disapproved by a resolution concurred in by a majority of  
29 the members of each house;

30 (7) prescribe by regulation, after consultation with the state fire  
31 marshal and the state sanitarian, standards that will ensure healthful and safe



1 conditions in the public and private schools of the state, including a requirement of  
2 physical examinations and immunizations in pre-elementary schools; the standards for  
3 private schools may not be more stringent than those for public schools;

4 (8) exercise general supervision over early education programs  
5 [PRE-ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS] that receive direct state or federal funding,  
6 including early education programs provided by a school district for students  
7 four and five years of age, and approve early education programs provided by a  
8 school district under AS 14.03.410(a);

9 (9) exercise general supervision over elementary and secondary  
10 correspondence study programs offered by municipal school districts or regional  
11 educational attendance areas; the department may also offer and make available to any  
12 Alaskan through a centralized office a correspondence study program;

13 (10) accredit private schools that request accreditation and that meet  
14 accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; nothing in this  
15 paragraph authorizes the department to require religious or other private schools to be  
16 licensed;

17 (11) review plans for construction of new public elementary and  
18 secondary schools and for additions to and major rehabilitation of existing public  
19 elementary and secondary schools and, in accordance with regulations adopted by the  
20 department, determine and approve the extent of eligibility for state aid of a school  
21 construction or major maintenance project; for the purposes of this paragraph, "plans"  
22 include educational specifications, schematic designs, projected energy consumption  
23 and costs, and final contract documents;

24 (12) provide educational opportunities in the areas of vocational  
25 education and training, and basic education to individuals over 16 years of age who  
26 are no longer attending school; the department may consult with businesses and labor  
27 unions to develop a program to prepare students for apprenticeships or internships that  
28 will lead to employment opportunities;

29 (13) administer the grants awarded under AS 14.11;

30 (14) establish, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety, a  
31 school bus driver training course;

(15) require the reporting of information relating to school disciplinary and safety programs under AS 14.33.120 and of incidents of disruptive or violent behavior;

(16) establish by regulation criteria, based on low student performance, under which the department may intervene in a school district to improve instructional practices, as described in AS 14.07.030(a)(14) or (15); the regulations must include

(A) a notice provision that alerts the district to the deficiencies and the instructional practice changes proposed by the department;

(B) an end date for departmental intervention, as described in AS 14.07.030(a)(14)(A) and (B) and (15), after the district demonstrates three consecutive years of improvement consisting of not less than two percent increases in student proficiency on standards-based assessments in language arts and mathematics, as provided in AS 14.03.123(f)(1)(A); and

(C) a process for districts to petition the department for continuing or discontinuing the department's intervention;

(17) notify the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education before intervening in a school district under AS 14.07.030(a)(14) or redirecting public school funding under AS 14.07.030(a)(15);

**(18) establish a reading program to provide direct support for and intervention in the reading intervention services of participating schools as described in AS 14.30.765 and 14.30.770.**

\* Sec. 11. AS 14.07.020(c) is amended to read:

(c) In this section, **"early education program"** ["PRE-ELEMENTARY SCHOOL"] means a **program** [SCHOOL] for children ages three through five years if the **program's** [SCHOOL'S] primary function is educational; **"early education program" does not include a program operated as a head start program under 42 U.S.C. 9831 - 9852c.**

\* Sec. 12. AS 14.07.050 is amended to read:

**Sec. 14.07.050. Selection of textbooks.** Textbooks for use in the public schools of the state, including a district offered statewide correspondence study program, shall be selected by district boards for district schools. Nothing in this

section precludes

(1) a correspondence study student, or the parent or guardian of a correspondence study student, from privately obtaining or using textbooks or curriculum material not provided by the school district;

(2) the department, in consultation with tribes and school districts to ensure textbooks are culturally relevant, from selecting and purchasing supplementary reading textbooks and materials for school districts to support reading intervention services provided under AS 14.30.765 and 14.30.770.

\* Sec. 13. AS 14.07.165(a) is amended to read:

(a) The board shall adopt

(1) statewide goals and require each governing body to adopt written goals that are consistent with local needs;

(2) regulations regarding the application for and award of grants under AS 14.03.125;

(3) regulations implementing provisions of AS 14.11.014(b);

(4) regulations requiring approval by the board before a charter school, state boarding school, or a public school may provide domiciliary services;

(5) regulations establishing standards for an early education program provided by a school district for children who are four and five years of age; the regulations must include

(A) standards for a locally designed, evidence-based program that meets Head Start Program Performance Standards and other federal standards required for early education programs to receive federal funding;

(B) a requirement that a teacher in charge of a program hold a valid teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20 and

(i) have satisfactorily completed a minimum of six credit hours in early childhood education or completes the minimum credit hours within two years of the date the teacher's employment with the early education program begins; or

(ii) have two or more years of experience teaching

kindergarten or another early education program and have completed additional coursework related to reading instruction, as required by the department;

(C) developmentally appropriate objectives for children four and five years of age rather than academic standards appropriate for older children; the objectives must allow school districts to adapt the content of an early education program to be culturally responsive to local communities;

(D) accommodations for the needs of all early education children and their families regardless of socioeconomic circumstances; and

(E) standards for day in session requirements appropriate for children four and five years of age;

(6) regulations establishing standards for day in session requirements appropriate for kindergarten students [REPEALED].

\* Sec. 14. AS 14.07.168 is amended to read:

**Sec. 14.07.168. Report to the legislature.** Not later than the 30th legislative day of each regular session of the legislature, the board shall prepare and present in person to the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education an annual report that describes the efforts of the board to develop, maintain, and continuously improve a comprehensive quality public education system, as provided for under the bylaws of the board. The report must include

(1) a summary of the resolves and rationales provided in support of policy decisions made under AS 14.03.015;

(2) program and curriculum changes made, discussed, or recommended in meetings held under AS 14.07.125;

(3) additional information relevant to efforts made to improve and maintain the public education system;

(4) a summary of implementation and utilization of the library established under AS 14.30.800, including a review of library effectiveness and the participation rates of districts, teachers, and students.

1     \* **Sec. 15.** AS 14.07.180(a) is amended to read:

2             (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the board shall establish  
3             standards and a procedure for the review, ranking, and approval of mathematics and  
4             English and language arts curricula for school districts to use in each grade level as  
5             provided in this section. The board may include curricula delivered through virtual  
6             education in the standards and procedure established under this subsection. **Standards**  
7             **established for the review, ranking, and approval of language arts curricula for**  
8             **early education programs and grades kindergarten through three must be based**  
9             **on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral**  
10            **language skills, and reading comprehension.**

11    \* **Sec. 16.** AS 14.17.500 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

12             (d) Except as provided in (e) and (f) of this section, a student in a district-wide  
13             early education program provided by a school district and approved by the department  
14             under AS 14.07.020(a)(8) is counted as one-half of a full-time equivalent student.

15             (e) A school district may not include in a school's ADM students who are four  
16             and five years of age if the students are enrolled in an early education program that  
17             receives state or federal funding other than funding under this chapter.

18             (f) A school district may not include in a school's ADM students who are four  
19             and five years of age if inclusion of the students would result in an increase of total  
20             state aid attributable to district-wide early education programs approved under  
21             AS 14.03.410 of more than \$3,000,000 from the previous fiscal year. The department  
22             shall prioritize the funding of district-wide early education programs, giving priority to  
23             school districts with lower performance, based on the department's ranking of districts  
24             under AS 14.03.410(c). When the number of students in a district-wide early  
25             education program will result in an increase of total state aid attributable to district-  
26             wide early education programs approved under AS 14.03.410 of more than \$3,000,000  
27             from the previous fiscal year, the department may identify the amount, up to  
28             \$3,000,000, available for the district's district-wide early education program.

29    \* **Sec. 17.** AS 14.17.505 is amended to read:

30             **Sec. 14.17.505. Fund balance in school operating fund.** (a) A district may  
31             not accumulate in a fiscal year an unreserved portion of its year-end fund balance in its

1 school operating fund, as defined by department regulations, that is greater than 25  
2 [10] percent of its expenditures for that fiscal year, unless the department approves  
3 a district plan to use the fund balance that is greater than 25 percent of its  
4 expenditures for that fiscal year.

5 (b) The department shall review each district's annual audit under  
6 AS 14.14.050 for the preceding fiscal year to ascertain its year-end operating fund  
7 balance. The amount by which the unreserved portion of that balance exceeds the  
8 amount permitted in (a) of this section, or the amount approved under (c) of this  
9 section if the district is eligible, shall be deducted from the state aid that would  
10 otherwise be paid to the district in the current fiscal year.

11 \* Sec. 18. AS 14.17.505 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

12 (c) The department may approve a plan to allow a district to accumulate funds  
13 greater than 25 percent of the district's expenditures for that fiscal year if

14 (1) the excess funds are not the result of reduced direct instruction  
15 costs;

16 (2) the department determines that the district has requested a  
17 reasonable period of time to use the excess funds; and

18 (3) the department determines that the proposed use of the excess  
19 funds will cause meaningful improvement to student education outcomes.

20 \* Sec. 19. AS 14.17.905(a) is amended to read:

21 (a) For purposes of this chapter, the determination of the number of schools in  
22 a district is subject to the following:

23 (1) a community with an ADM of at least 10, but not more than 100,  
24 shall be counted as one school;

25 (2) a community with an ADM of at least 101, but not more than 425,  
26 shall be counted as

27 (A) one elementary school, which includes those students in  
28 grades kindergarten through six and, except as provided in AS 14.17.500, in  
29 an early education program provided by a school district and approved by  
30 the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8); and

31 (B) one secondary school, which includes students in grades

seven through 12;

(3) in a community with an ADM of greater than 425, each facility that is administered as a separate school shall be counted as one school, except that each alternative school with an ADM of less than 175 shall be counted as a part of the school in the district with the highest ADM.

\* Sec. 20. AS 14.20.015(c) is amended to read:

(c) The preliminary teacher certificate issued under this section must contain the same endorsements as those on the current valid teacher certificate issued by the other state. However, before teaching students in grades kindergarten through three, a teacher certificated under this section must complete coursework, training, or testing requirements, and demonstrate proficiency as determined by the department, in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading comprehension approved by the board in regulation. A teacher may apply coursework, training, or testing requirements completed under this subsection toward continuing education requirements established by the board in regulation. A teacher certificated under this section shall complete training in racial equity, conscious and unconscious bias, teaching through an Alaska Native lens and using Alaska Native cultural standards, and trauma-informed and culturally relevant education.

\* Sec. 21. AS 14.20.020 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

(l) Before teaching students in grades kindergarten through three, a teacher certificated under this section must complete coursework, training, or testing requirements in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading comprehension approved by the board in regulation. A teacher may apply coursework, training, or testing requirements completed under this subsection toward continuing education requirements established by the board in regulation.

(m) A teacher certificated under this section shall complete training in racial equity, conscious and unconscious bias, teaching through an Alaska Native lens and using Alaska Native cultural standards, and trauma-informed and culturally relevant education.

1 \* **Sec. 22.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding a new section to article 10 to read:

2       **Sec. 14.30.430. Alaska Native language immersion programs.** The  
3 department may collaborate with a school district to develop an Alaska Native  
4 language immersion program for students in grade kindergarten through grade three.  
5 The department may provide financial and technical support for a program. The  
6 department and district operating a program shall evaluate the program's success in  
7 increasing student literacy in both the Alaska Native language and English.

8 \* **Sec. 23.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding new sections to read:

9                   **Article 15. Reading Intervention.**

10       **Sec. 14.30.760. Statewide assessment and support.** (a) To implement the  
11 district reading intervention services established under AS 14.30.765, the department  
12 shall

13               (1) adopt a statewide screening or assessment tool to administer to  
14 students in grades kindergarten through three to identify students with reading  
15 deficiencies, including students with characteristics of dyslexia; the screening or  
16 assessment tool must evaluate

17                   (A) phonemic awareness, letter naming fluency, letter sound  
18 fluency, and letter word sound fluency of students in kindergarten;

19                   (B) letter word sound fluency and oral reading fluency of  
20 students in grade one;

21                   (C) vocabulary and oral reading fluency of students in grades  
22 two and three;

23       (2) support teachers of grades kindergarten through three by

24                   (A) administering the statewide screening or assessment tool  
25 three times each school year, once in the fall, once in the winter, and once in  
26 the spring, to all students in grades kindergarten through three, with the  
27 exception of students who demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the first  
28 screening or assessment of the school year;

29                   (B) providing methods to monitor student progress;

30                   (C) providing targeted instruction based on student needs as  
31 determined by the results of the screening or assessment tool; and



(D) providing additional assistance as determined by the department;

(3) provide training to school district staff related to using the results of the statewide screening or assessment tool and understanding evidence-based reading interventions, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading comprehension;

(4) require that districts identify the early education programs attended by students and report to the department the average score on each performance assessment by students in grades kindergarten through three who

(A) attended a state-approved early education program;

(B) attended a Head Start program;

(C) attended a private early education program;

(D) did not attend an early education program;

(5) establish a process that allows the commissioner to waive, upon request, use of the statewide screening or assessment tool required under this subsection by a school district if the school district has adopted an evidence-based reading screening or assessment tool and the screening or assessment tool is approved by the department;

(6) review and approve alternative standardized reading screenings or assessments for use by school districts.

(b) In adopting a statewide screening or assessment tool under (a)(1) of this section, the department shall consider the following factors:

(1) the amount of time needed to administer the screening or assessment, with the intention of minimizing effects on instructional time;

(2) the time frame for reporting screening or assessment results to teachers, administrators, and parents or guardians;

(3) the integration of the screening or assessment with student instruction and department support;

(4) recommendations from a task force, working group, or committee created by law and charged with studying issues related to reading proficiency and

1 reading deficiencies; and

2 (5) whether the screening or assessment is culturally responsive and  
3 meets local needs.

4 **Sec. 14.30.765. Reading intervention services and strategies; progression.**

5 (a) Each school district may offer intensive reading intervention services to students in  
6 grades kindergarten through three who exhibit a reading deficiency to assist the  
7 students in achieving reading proficiency at or above grade level by the end of grade  
8 three. The district may provide the intensive reading intervention services in addition  
9 to the core reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education  
10 classroom. If the district elects to provide intensive reading intervention services, the  
11 services must, to the extent practicable,

12 (1) be provided by a district reading teacher, or paraprofessional under  
13 the supervision of a reading teacher, to all students in grades kindergarten through  
14 three who are determined to have a reading deficiency based on the statewide  
15 screening or assessment tool adopted under AS 14.30.760(a)(1);

16 (2) provide explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness,  
17 phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading  
18 comprehension, as necessary;

19 (3) use evidence-based reading intervention methods that have shown  
20 proven results in accelerating student reading achievement within a single school year;

21 (4) include instruction with detailed explanations, extensive  
22 opportunities for guided practice, and opportunities for error correction and feedback;

23 (5) incorporate daily targeted small group reading instruction based on  
24 student needs, either in person or online;

25 (6) monitor the reading progress of each student's reading skills  
26 throughout the school year and adjust instruction according to student needs;

27 (7) be implemented during regular school hours through any available  
28 method, including in person or through online delivery by teachers or specialty  
29 reading coaches;

30 (8) be implemented outside of regular school hours, as directed in the  
31 student's individual reading improvement plan under (b) of this section, for a student

1 who scores at the lowest achievement level on the statewide screening or assessment  
2 tool;

3 (9) be reviewed based on a department-approved response to  
4 intervention or multi-tiered system support models, addressing additional support and  
5 services needed to remedy identified needs; and

6 (10) support reading intervention at home by parents or guardians by  
7 offering a list of adult literacy resources and organizations, providing opportunities for  
8 parent or guardian participation in training workshops, and encouraging regular parent  
9 or guardian-guided home reading activities.

10 (b) In addition to the reading intervention services provided under (a) of this  
11 section, a school district shall provide an individual reading improvement plan for  
12 each student in grades kindergarten through three who is determined to have a reading  
13 deficiency based on the statewide screening or assessment tool. An individual reading  
14 improvement plan developed under this section must

15 (1) be implemented not later than 30 days after identification of the  
16 reading deficiency;

17 (2) be created by the student's reading teacher in consultation with the  
18 school principal, the student's parent or guardian, and other pertinent district staff;

19 (3) describe the evidence-based reading intervention services the  
20 student will receive to achieve and demonstrate sufficient reading skills;

21 (4) provide reading intervention services, to the extent practicable,  
22 outside of regular school hours for a student who scores at the lowest achievement  
23 level on the statewide screening or assessment tool consistent with (a)(8) of this  
24 section;

25 (5) include a process for monitoring progress and adjusting the plan  
26 based on student needs;

27 (6) provide to the student's parent or guardian at least 10 reading  
28 progress updates each school year;

29 (7) be culturally responsive; and

30 (8) support the student reading at home with a parent or guardian by  
31 offering a list of adult literacy resources and organizations, providing opportunities for

parent or guardian participation in training workshops, and encouraging regular parent or guardian-guided home reading activities.

(c) If, during the school year, a student in grades kindergarten through three demonstrates a reading deficiency, the district or school shall notify the student's parent or guardian. The initial notification must

(1) be provided to the student's parent or guardian not later than 15 days after identification of the reading deficiency;

(2) state that the district identified the student as having a reading deficiency and that a reading improvement plan will be developed under (b) of this section;

(3) describe current services that the district is providing to the student;

(4) describe the proposed evidence-based reading intervention and supplemental instructional services and supports that the district will provide to the student to improve the identified area of reading deficiency;

(5) explain that the district or school will inform the parent or guardian orally or in writing, as selected by the parent or guardian, of the student's progress toward grade level reading as outlined in the student's individual reading improvement plan;

(6) identify strategies for the parent or guardian to use at home to help the student succeed in reading;

(7) explain that if the student has a reading deficiency at the end of the school year, the parent or guardian may consider delaying the student's progression; and

(8) identify mid-year progression as an option for students who do not progress to the next grade.

(d) If it is determined, based on a screening or assessment administered in the spring, that a student has a reading deficiency, the student's teacher and other pertinent district staff shall notify and attempt to meet with the student's parent or guardian as many times as practicable to explain that the student will not be able to maintain adequate academic progress at the next grade level. School staff shall work with the parent or guardian to schedule a date, time, and place for the meeting, to be held not

1 later than 45 days before the end of the school year. Following that meeting, the parent  
2 or guardian shall determine whether the student will progress to the next grade.

3 (e) A student in grade three should demonstrate sufficient reading skills to  
4 progress to grade four. A student demonstrates sufficient reading skills to progress to  
5 grade four by

6 (1) scoring at grade level or higher on the statewide screening or  
7 assessment tool or on the statewide summative assessment;

8 (2) achieving an acceptable score on an alternative standardized  
9 reading screening or assessment as determined and approved by the department; or

10 (3) demonstrating mastery of reading standards through a student  
11 reading portfolio based on criteria established by the department.

12 (f) If no parent or guardian attends the meeting under (d) of this section, the  
13 student will progress to the next grade. The district or school in which the student is  
14 enrolled shall immediately provide oral and written notification to the student's parent  
15 or guardian explaining that the parent or guardian may reschedule the meeting  
16 provided under (d) of this section. At a rescheduled meeting, the parent or guardian  
17 may decide to progress or retain the student.

18 (g) For a student who does not progress to the next grade, the district in which  
19 the student is enrolled shall

20 (1) review the student's individual reading improvement plan;

21 (2) provide intensive reading intervention services to improve the area  
22 of reading deficiency using effective instructional strategies to accelerate student  
23 progress;

24 (3) provide additional services and support to improve the student's  
25 identified area of reading deficiency, including

26 (A) a transitional instructional setting that is designed to  
27 produce learning gains;

28 (B) supplemental tutoring offered by a person with specialized  
29 reading training;

30 (C) increased time dedicated to the reading instruction methods  
31 described in (a)(3) - (5) of this section, including more extensive opportunities

1 for guided practice, and error correction and feedback;

2 (4) develop a plan for reading at home outlined in an agreement with  
3 the student's parent or guardian, including parent or guardian participation in training  
4 workshops and regular parent or guardian-guided home reading activities;

5 (5) upon request by the student's parent or guardian, develop a plan for  
6 the student's mid-year progression.

7 (h) A district shall, for the remainder of the academic year, and, if necessary,  
8 for additional school years, continue to implement an individual reading improvement  
9 plan for a student promoted mid-year under (g)(5) of this section.

10 (i) In this section, "reading teacher" means a teacher who

11 (1) holds a valid teacher certificate under AS 14.20;

12 (2) has demonstrated effectiveness in instructing students to read at or  
13 above grade level as measured by student reading performance data and in teacher  
14 performance evaluations; and

15 (3) meets the requirements established by the state Board of Education  
16 and Early Development in regulation.

17 **Sec. 14.30.770. Department reading program.** (a) The department shall  
18 establish a reading program to provide direct support for and intervention in intensive  
19 reading intervention services in the lowest-performing schools serving students in  
20 grades kindergarten through three as determined under AS 14.03.123. A school may  
21 opt out of the reading program. If a school opts out of the reading program, the next  
22 lowest-performing school may participate in the program. State funding provided to  
23 participating schools for implementation of the reading program is in addition to the  
24 amount of funding provided under AS 14.17. In conducting the program, the  
25 department shall

26 (1) use the accountability system established in AS 14.03.123 to  
27 identify low-performing schools;

28 (2) provide the program to the 10 lowest-performing schools that have  
29 not opted out;

30 (3) employ and assign a reading specialist for a period of not less than  
31 one year, or until every student requiring intervention has progressed beyond the

1 student's individual reading plan, for each participating school to direct the  
2 implementation of the intensive reading intervention services provided under  
3 AS 14.30.765 by

4 (A) working directly with teachers and students to implement  
5 individual reading plans;

6 (B) modeling effective instructional strategies for teachers by  
7 working regularly with students as a class, in small groups, or individually;

8 (C) coaching and mentoring teachers and staff in reading  
9 instruction with an emphasis on prioritizing time in a manner that has the  
10 greatest positive effects on student achievement;

11 (D) training teachers in data analysis and using data to  
12 differentiate instruction;

13 (E) leading and supporting reading leadership teams; and

14 (F) reporting on school and student performance to the  
15 department;

16 (4) employ and assign an additional reading intervention specialist at a  
17 school for every four classes in which at least 25 percent of students require reading  
18 intervention services;

19 (5) establish a reporting process for each reading specialist to submit  
20 updates to the department on implementation of the program;

21 (6) work with reading specialists to create specific improvement goals  
22 for each participating school, including measures of interim progress;

23 (7) select and purchase additional optional reading material for each  
24 participating school to supplement the intensive reading intervention services;

25 (8) pay travel and associated costs for a reading specialist to attend  
26 relevant training sessions identified by or hosted by the department;

27 (9) periodically review staff development programs for their  
28 effectiveness in developing reading skills and, after consultation with school districts  
29 and experts, recommend to the board for approval staff development programs that

30 (A) have been proven to assess and accelerate student progress  
31 toward reaching reading competency;

(B) provide explicit and systematic skill development in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading comprehension;

(C) are evidence-based and reliable;

(D) provide initial and ongoing analysis of student progress toward reaching reading competency; and

(E) include texts on core academic content to assist students in maintaining or meeting grade-appropriate proficiency in academic subjects in addition to reading;

(10) annually convene, either in person or electronically, a panel to review and provide commentary on the effectiveness of the reading intervention services provided under AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.785; the panel must include teachers of grades kindergarten through three, school administrators, and parents of students in grades kindergarten through three, who collectively represent the regions of the state and include stakeholders from indigenous language immersion programs, representatives from early education stakeholder groups, and researchers of best practices for improving literacy performance of indigenous students and students whose first language is not English.

(b) A school participating in the reading program established under this section shall

(1) ensure that a reading specialist assigned to the school is not required to perform functions that divert from the duties the department has assigned to the reading specialist;

(2) coordinate with the reading specialist or specialists to redesign the school's daily schedule to dedicate time to reading program activities, including intensive reading intervention services identified in a written agreement between the school and the department;

(3) present on the reading program established under this section and the intensive reading intervention services provided under AS 14.30.765 at a public meeting; the presentation must include

(A) the data the department used to identify the school as



1 eligible for the reading program;

2 (B) a detailed overview of the reading program and intensive  
3 reading intervention services;

4 (C) a timeline for implementing the intensive reading  
5 intervention services and meeting reading improvement goals; and

6 (D) the implications of the program for students, families, and  
7 educators;

8 (4) provide notice of the public meeting required under (3) of this  
9 subsection to the parent or guardian of each student at least seven days before the date  
10 of the meeting;

11 (5) present an annual update on the school's implementation of the  
12 reading program and intensive reading intervention services at a public meeting with  
13 notice provided to the parent or guardian of each student at least seven days before the  
14 date of the meeting;

15 (6) create partnerships between the school, the families of students,  
16 and the community that focus on promoting reading and increasing the amount of time  
17 that students spend reading.

18 (c) The department shall publish on the department's Internet website and  
19 make available to the public the reading program and intensive reading intervention  
20 services implemented by each participating school.

21 (d) The department may employ a person as a reading specialist under this  
22 section if the person

23 (1) holds a valid teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20;

24 (2) has completed an approved graduate program for the preparation of  
25 reading specialists at an approved institution of higher education and

26 (A) has completed a supervised practicum or internship as a  
27 reading specialist; or

28 (B) has at least three years of full-time, demonstrated  
29 classroom teaching experience where reading instruction was a primary  
30 responsibility;

31 (3) is knowledgeable about and demonstrates competency in reading

instruction, including

(A) an understanding of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading comprehension;

(B) knowledge of and experience in implementing effective reading instruction strategies and intervention methods;

(C) experience in designing and implementing a school-wide response to intervention program or multi-tiered system support model;

(D) an understanding of and experience in reading screenings or assessments and data analyses that inform instruction;

(E) knowledge of dyslexia and other learning disorders that affect reading achievement;

(F) knowledge of and an ability to effectively articulate the methods, issues, and resources involved in support of student instruction to a wide variety of audiences, including staff, parents, and students whose primary language is other than English; and

(4) meets other reading instruction coursework requirements established by the department in regulation.

**Sec. 14.30.775. Support for reading improvement plans.** The state shall provide to a school district, for each student in grades kindergarten through three who is determined to have a reading deficiency based on an approved screening or assessment tool, \$1,000 to provide the support, intervention, and services the student needs for the student's reading improvement plan, including teacher and paraprofessional career development.

**Sec. 14.30.780. Nonapplication.** The provisions of AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.785 do not apply to an Alaska Native language immersion program offered by a district or school or a student participating in an Alaska Native language immersion program; however, the department may adopt regulations and collaborate with Alaska Native language immersion programs to assist development of program strategies to improve reading proficiency for students in grades kindergarten through three. In this section, "Alaska Native language immersion program" means an educational program that is

1 taught in an Alaska Native language for at least four hours each school day.

2 **Sec. 14.30.785. Definitions.** In AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.785,

3 (1) "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990;

4 (2) "evidence-based reading intervention" means an intervention based  
5 on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence that has a demonstrated record of success  
6 in adequately increasing a student's reading competency in the areas of phonemic  
7 awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills,  
8 and reading comprehension;

9 (3) "parent" or "guardian" includes a natural, adoptive, and foster  
10 parent, stepparent, legal guardian, relative, and other adult person with whom a  
11 student has resided and who has acted as a parent in providing for the student or has  
12 been responsible for the student's welfare for a continuous period.

13 \* **Sec. 24.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding a new section to read:

14 **Article 16. Virtual Education.**

15 **Sec. 14.30.800. Virtual education library.** (a) The department shall, in  
16 cooperation with school districts, establish a virtual education library for the purpose  
17 of making virtual education and professional development resources available to  
18 students and teachers in the state. The department shall establish standards for library  
19 resources. The department shall establish and maintain a library created by teachers,  
20 educators, education professionals, and school districts, the University of Alaska, and  
21 other education resources, including virtual education courses for students, training in  
22 virtual instruction for teachers, and professional development courses for teachers of  
23 students throughout the state if the coursework curriculum meets the state standards  
24 established by the department. The library database must be accessible to all school  
25 districts, teachers, and recognized correspondence programs in the state.

26 (b) For teachers delivering or facilitating virtual coursework to students  
27 through the library database, the department shall provide training and professional  
28 development on virtual instruction methods and the differences between virtual  
29 instruction and instruction offered in a classroom.

30 (c) The department shall make reading specialists available to school districts  
31 to provide virtual intensive reading intervention services. The duties of a reading

specialist include

(1) modeling effective instructional strategies for teachers by working regularly with students as a class, in small groups, or individually;

(2) coaching and mentoring teachers and staff in reading instruction with an emphasis on prioritizing time in a manner that has the greatest positive effects on student achievement;

(3) training teachers in data analysis and using data to differentiate instruction;

(4) leading and supporting reading leadership teams consisting of school staff who volunteer to participate; and

(5) reporting on school and student performance to the department.

(d) A school district that provides a course included in the library database may charge a fee to the school district in which a student who takes the course is enrolled. The department shall establish the fee in regulation.

(e) In this section, "virtual education" or "virtual instruction" means instruction delivered through telecommunications or another digital or electronic method.

\* Sec. 25. AS 14.60.010 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

(9) "culturally responsive" means showing respect for and recognition of the traditions, beliefs, languages, values, and practices of the local culture that has historically been present in the geographic area being served.

\* Sec. 26. AS 47.17.290(12) is amended to read:

(12) "organization" means a group or entity that provides care and supervision for compensation to a child not related to the caregiver, and includes a child care facility, pre-elementary school, early education program, head start center, child foster home, residential child care facility, recreation program, children's camp, and children's club;

\* Sec. 27. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

VIRTUAL EDUCATION AVAILABILITY DEADLINE. The Department of Education and Early Development shall make available virtual education courses and

professional development resources under AS 14.30.800, added by sec. 24 of this Act, on or before July 1, 2024.

\* Sec. 28. The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

APPLICABILITY. AS 14.20.020(l), added by sec. 21 of this Act, applies,

(1) on the effective date of sec. 21 of this Act, to teachers who begin teaching students in grades kindergarten through three on and after the effective date of sec. 21 of this Act;

(2) on July 1, 2024, to teachers who began teaching students in grades kindergarten through three before the effective date of sec. 21 of this Act.

\* Sec. 29. The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE. Not later than the thirtieth day of the First Regular Session of the Thirty-Eighth Alaska State Legislature, the Department of Education and Early Development shall prepare and present to the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education a report evaluating the virtual education library established under AS 14.30.800 and the following programs established under this Act: the early education program, the parents as teachers program, the reading intervention services, and the department reading program. The report must include

(1) data analysis conducted by an independent contractor evaluating the success of each program, including

(A) statistics measuring the effectiveness of each program in accomplishing the program mission;

(B) the cost-effectiveness of each program;

(C) trends in reading assessment scores by each group of students listed in AS 14.30.760(a)(4) as the students progress through grade eight;

(2) recommendations from the panels convened under AS 14.30.770(a)(10); and

(3) recommendations from the Department of Education and Early Development addressing whether to extend, expand, contract, or repeal each program.

\* Sec. 30. The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to

1 read:

2       TRANSITION. The number of district-wide early education programs that the  
3 department approves under AS 14.03.410 in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, may not  
4 result in more than \$3,000,000 of total state aid attributable to early education programs. In  
5 the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, the number of district-wide early education programs  
6 that the department approves may not result in an increase from the prior fiscal year of more  
7 than \$3,000,000 of total state aid attributable to early education programs.

8       \* Sec. 31. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
9 read:

10       TRANSITION: REGULATIONS. The Department of Education and Early  
11 Development and the state Board of Education and Early Development may adopt regulations  
12 necessary to implement the changes made by this Act. The regulations take effect under  
13 AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act), but a regulation may not take effect before the  
14 effective date of the relevant provision of this Act implemented by the regulation.

15       \* Sec. 32. This Act takes effect July 1, 2022.



# Representative Chris Tuck

Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 216  
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 465-2095  
Toll-free: (866) 465-2095

## **House Bill 164 – Early Ed Programs; Reading; Virtual Ed**

### **Version G – Summary of Changes**

Version G of House Bill 164 removes sections 4, 6, 8, 12, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30, 32, and 40. In version I of the bill these sections repealed the changes made by the bill on June 30, 2034. As a result of removing the repealers, any changes described in version G pertaining to Sections 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 15, 18, 21, 25, 29, 31, and 39 would be permanent.

Version G amends the title of the bill to align with changes made through the amendment process. *(Page 1, lines 1-11)*

Version G amends the short title to “The Alaska Reads Act.” *(Page 2, line 3)*

Version G inserts legislative intent language affirming that this legislation does not promote English-only reading curricula and recognizes a student’s right to learn to read through culturally responsive materials in multiple languages. *(Page 2, lines 4-11)*

Section 3 of version G aligns with section 2 of version I. *(Page 2)*

Section 4 of version G aligns with Section 3 of version I. *(Page 2)*

Version G removes section 4 of version I.

Section 5 of version G amends section 6 of version I to clarify when parents and guardians receive early reading information and inserts subsection 6 regarding the role of socio-emotional learning on developmental success. *(Page 3, lines 1-15)*

Version G removes section 6 of version I.

Section 6 of version G amends section 7 of version I by directing DEED to employ a data analyst. *(Page 3, Line 17 and removing 8(a)(b)(c) from section 7 of v. I Page 4, Lines 6-11)*

Version G removes sections 8 and 9 of version I.

Section 7 of version G. aligns with Section 10 of version I and clarifies that a child who is at least four years of age maybe be admitted to a public early education program. *(Page 4)*

Version G removes sections 11 and 12 of version I.

Section 8 of version G aligns with Section 13 of version I. However, reporting requirements under subsections (e) and (f) in version I are removed. This is because changes made to version I removed progression waivers and good causes exemptions. *(Pages 4-5, Lines 24-18)*

Section 9 of version G aligns with section 14 of version I and inserts subsection (d) under AS 14.03.420 Parents as Teachers program, clarifying the term “parent,” to include a broad and culturally responsive definition. *(Page 8, Lines 2-5)*

Section 10 of version G aligns with section 15 of version I. *(Pages 8-9)*

Version G removes section 16 of version I.

Section 11 of version G aligns with section 17 of version I and inserts clarifying language regarding the exclusion of head start from the definition of an early education program operated by a public school. *(Page 10, Lines 25-26)*

Section 12 of version G aligns with Section 18 of version I and directs DEED to consult schools and tribes when providing optional textbooks to school districts who request additional support while implementing reading intervention services provided under authorizing statutes in this Act. *(Page 11, Lines 5-8)*



Version G removes section 19 of version I.

Section 13 of version G aligns with section 20 of version I by amending subsection (5)(B)(i) to extend the allotted time an educator may complete minimum requirements in early education from one to two years. *(Page 11, Lines 27-30)*

Section 14 of version G aligns with Section 21 of version I. *(Page 12)*

Version G removes section 22 of version I.

Section 15 of version G aligns with section 23 of version I. *(Page 13)*

Version G removes section 24 of version I.

Section 16 of version G aligns with section 25 of version I. *(Page 13)*

Version G removes section 24 of version I.

Section 17 of version G aligns with section 27 of version I. *(Pages 13-14)*

Section 18 of version G aligns with section 28 of version I. *(Page 14)*

Section 19 of version G aligns with section 29 of version I. *(Page 14)*

Version G removes section 30 of version I.

Section 20 of version G aligns with section 31 of version I by inserting a provision that requires any out-of-state preliminary teacher being certified under this section to teach in Alaska to also complete additional training through an Alaska Native lens and using Alaska Native cultural standards. *(Page 15, Lines 16-19)*

Version G removes sections 32 and 33 of version I.

Section 21 of version G aligns with section 34 of version I and inserts a new subsection (m) that requires any out-of-state preliminary teacher being certified under this section to teach in Alaska to also complete additional through an Alaska Native lens and using Alaska Native cultural standards. *(Page 15, Lines 28-31)*

Version G inserts a new section to AS 14.30 and authorizes DEED to collaborate with and provide technical and financial support to a school district to develop Alaska Native language immersion programs for kindergarten through grade three. *(Page 16, Lines 2-7)*

Section 23 of version G aligns with section 35 of version I and makes the following changes:

- Permits school districts to opt-out of offering individualized intensive reading services to students in grades kindergarten through three. *(Page 18, Line 5)*
- Permits school districts to opt-out of providing intensive reading services in addition to core reading instruction to all students. *(Page 18, Line 8)*
- Aligns AS 14.30.765 subsection (c)(7) with the removal of subsections (8) and (9) in version I by removing the provision that prohibits a struggling kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade reader from being retained more than once. *(Page 20, Lines 19-20)*
- Removes AS 14.30.765 subsections (8) and (9) that requires a school district to explain the waiver process to a parent or guardian.
- Amends AS 14.30.765 subsection (d) to require a parent or guardian to determine whether a struggling reader may progress to the next grade and removes any contingency provision if a parent or guardian is unavailable for consultation. *(Pages 20 & 21, Lines 26-2)*

- Removes AS 14.30.765 subsection (g) which required DEED to develop a recognition program for districts that demonstrate intervention reading services success.
- Removes AS 14.30.765 subsection (h) which permitted a superintendent to exempt a student from grade retention and provided good cause exemptions for students with disabilities, students who have previously received intensive reading services, or students who are English language learners.
- Removes AS 14.30.765 subsection (i) which permitted a parent or guardian to request a good cause exemption for their struggling reader.
- Removes AS 14.30.765 subsection (j) which outlined the process for notification of a parent or guardian when the superintendent retention contingency provision under version I AS 14.30.765 was enacted.
- Removes AS 14.30.765 subsection (m)(1) & (2), which outlined specific criteria school districts must consider when adopting a mid-year progression policy.
- Removes AS 14.30.765 subsection (o) which prohibited a struggling reader from being retained more than once.
- Amends AS 14.30.770 by removing the limiting percentage of low-performing schools served, frequency in which schools may be served, removing the application process, permitting schools to opt-out of the program, increasing the number of participating schools to ten (10), requiring DEED to hire a reading specialist for at least a year or until every student requiring intervention has progressed, requiring a reading specialist to work directly with struggling readers and their primary teacher, inserting

language requiring DEED to hire at least one reading specialist for every four (4) classes in which 25 percent of students require individual reading plans, broaden membership and participation in an annual convening of stakeholders regarding program efficacy and implementation, and authorizes equal consideration of the academic or professional experience in qualifying a candidate for a DEED-funded reading specialist position. *(Pages 25-26)*

- Inserts AS 14.30.775 and directs the state to appropriate \$1,000 for each K-3 grade struggling reader to a school district. *(Page 26, Lines 19-24)*
- Inserts AS 14.30.780 and exempts an Alaska Native language immersion program from AS 14.30.770. This section does permit DEED to assist in reading program strategies if requested. *(Page 26 & 27, Lines 25-1)*

Section 24 of version G aligns with Section 36 of version I and makes the following changes:

- Amends all references of “consortium,” to “library.”
- Directs DEED to establish and maintain a library that is created by local educators, school districts, the University of Alaska, and other locally sourced resources. *(Page 27, Lines 19-24)*
- Removes a provision under subsection (b) and associated subsections (b)(1) and (2) that permitted virtual instruction.
- Substantially amends subsection (d) by removing the ability for DEED to charge a fee to school districts that participate in the consortium and instead permit a school district to charge a fee for a course included in the library. *(Page 28, Lines 12-14)*
- Removes subsections (e) and (f).

Section 25 of version G aligns with Section 37 of version I.

Section 26 of version G aligns with Section 38 of version I.

Version G removes Sections 39 & 40 of version I.

Section 27 of version G aligns with Section 41 of version I.

Section 28 of version G aligns with Section 42 of version I.

Section 29 of version G aligns with Section 43 of version I.

Section 30 of version G aligns with Section 44 of version I.

Section 31 of version G aligns with Section 45 of version I.

Version G removes section 46 of version I.

Section 32 of version G aligns with Section 47 of version I and removes reference to the above section as all the changes made in this Act will continue in perpetuity unless amended by future legislatures.



# Representative Chris Tuck

Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 216  
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 465-2095  
Toll-free: (866) 465-2095

## House Bill 164 Version G – Early Ed Programs; Reading; Virtual Ed Updated Sectional Analysis

*“An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to reading; relating to public schools and school districts; relating to early education programs; relating to funding for early education programs; relating to school age eligibility; relating to reports by the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to reports by school districts; relating to certification and competency of teachers; relating to assessing reading deficiencies and providing reading intervention services to public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through three; relating to textbooks and materials for reading intervention services; establishing a reading program in the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to school operating funds; relating to a virtual education library; and providing for an effective date.”*

**Section 1** – Establishes this Act as the Alaska Reads Act.

**Section 2** – Inserts legislative intent language recognizing a student’s right to learn to read through culturally responsive materials in multiple languages.

**Section 3** – Amends AS 14.03.040, Day in session, to clarify the length of a school day for grades 4- 12.

**Section 4** – Amends AS 14.03.060 to give the Alaska Department of Early Education and Development (DEED) the ability to approve and supervise a district early education program.

**Section 5** – Amends AS 14.03.072 by aligning terminology and requiring all districts provide information regarding the importance of early reading, adult literacy, and socio-emotional learning to parents and guardians of students at the first parent-teacher conference of the year.

**Section 6** – Amends AS 14.03.078 by directing DEED to employ a data analyst and include in their annual report to the legislature information collected under AS 14.03.120 and AS 14.30-760 – 14.30.775.

**Section 7** – Amends AS 14.03.080 to allow children who are at least four (4) years of age to attend publicly provided early education programs.

**Section 8** – Amends AS 14.03.120 by adding a new subsection that establishes annual reporting requirements for school districts to report student performance metrics in grades K-3.

**Section 9** – Amends AS 14.03 by establishing a statewide early education grant program. The early education grant program includes financial support, professional training, and technical assistance to school districts to develop or improve their high-quality, locally designed, culturally responsive, universal voluntary pre-K program.

Participation in the grant program is not required and school districts are not mandated to establish a pre-K program.

AS 14.03.420 codifies the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program as a program of the state within DEED and specifies criteria for PAT to demonstrate its efficacy in supporting school districts with pre-K education.

**Section 10** – Amends AS 14.07.020 and directs DEED to supervise all early education programs, approve those early education programs established under AS 14.03.410, establish a new reading program (AS 14.07.065), and offer reading intervention programs to participating schools (AS 14.30.770).

**Section 11** – AS 14.07.020 is amended to define an early education program as a pre-K program, but not including a head start program, for students three to five years old if its primary function is educational.

**Section 12** – Amends AS 14.07.050 to direct DEED to consult schools and tribes when providing optional textbooks to school districts who request additional support while implementing reading intervention services provided under the authorizing statutes in this Act.

**Section 13** – Amends AS 14.07.165 by directing the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development (state board) to establish regulations for a high-quality, locally designed, evidence-based, culturally responsive early education program for children who are four and five years of age.

**Section 14** – Amends AS 14.07.168 by directing the state board to include information and analysis collected under AS 14.30.800.

**Section 15** – Amends AS 14.07.180 by directing the state board to establish standards for reviewing and approving early education through grade 3 language arts curricula based on the five components of evidence-based reading.

**Section 16** – Amends AS 14.17.500 by adding new subsections on how a student participating in a DEED-approved early education program is counted under a school district's Average Daily Membership (ADM) calculations.

**Sections 17 and 18** – Amends AS 14.17.505 by increasing the unreserved fund balance a school district may carry forward into a new fiscal year.

**Section 19** – Amends AS 14.17.905 to include students in early education programs approved by DEED in the definition of an elementary school.

**Section 20** – Amends AS 14.20.015 to ensure teaching certificate reciprocity and teaching proficiency for teachers moving to Alaska. The section inserts a provision requiring any out-of-state preliminary teacher being certified under this section to teach in Alaska to complete additional training through an Alaska Native lens and using Alaska Native cultural standards.

**Section 21** – Amends AS 14.20.020 by adding a new subsection to require all teachers to complete at least three credits or equivalency in evidence-based reading instruction to be eligible for an endorsement in elementary education. The section inserts a provision for any out-of-state preliminary teacher being certified under this section to teach in Alaska that they must also complete additional training through an Alaska Native lens and using Alaska Native cultural standards.



**Section 22** – Inserts a new section to AS 14.30 and authorizes DEED to collaborate with a school district to develop an Alaska Native language immersion program for kindergarten through grade three. The section allows DEED to provide technical and financial support to school districts.

**Section 23** – Establishes Article 15, Reading Intervention.

Establishes AS 14.30.760, which directs DEED to establish a culturally responsive statewide reading program and support school districts in implementation.

Establishes AS 14.30.765, which permits school districts to opt-out of providing culturally responsive intensive reading intervention services to K-3 students who are identified as struggling readers.

Establishes AS 14.30.770, which directs DEED to establish a statewide reading program to assist the lowest-performing school districts serving K-3 students in providing reading intervention services.

**Section 24** – Establishes Article 16, Virtual Education.

Establishes AS 14.30.800, a virtual education library operated by DEED in collaboration with educators, school districts, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and other local education resources.

**Section 25** – Amends AS 14.60.010 to provide a definition of “culturally responsive.”

**Section 26** – Directs early education program staff to be included in those required to report evidence of child abuse.

**Section 27** – Establishes a July 1, 2024, deadline for when DEED must make virtual education courses available.

**Section 28** – Provides applicability language relating to endorsements in elementary education issued on or after the effective date of this Act.

**Section 29** – Directs DEED to provide a detailed analysis of this Act to the Alaska State Legislature no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the First Regular Session of the 38<sup>th</sup> Alaska State Legislature.

**Section 30** – Is transition language that prohibits DEED from approving more than \$3,000,000 in state aid for early education programs for FY 23 above the previous fiscal year.

**Section 31** – Is transition language that permits DEED to begin adopting the regulations needed to actualize this Act prior to the effective date of the legislation.

**Section 32** – Establishes an effective date of July 1, 2022.



# Representative Chris Tuck

Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 216  
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 465-2095  
Toll-free: (866) 465-2095

## House Bill 164 – Summary of Additional Supporting Documents

### **Alaska School District K-3 Reading Report to the Legislature compiled by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.**

- The report shows an inconsistent approach to reading instruction across Alaska with inadequate measures for quality control.
- Labeled: HB 164 Research Alaska School District K-3 Reading Survey Report to the Legislature 1.25.2022

### **Colorado’s curriculum crackdown by Dale Chu.**

- A report from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute detailing how the education department in the state of Colorado has been reinforcing school districts' use of approved evidence-based reading curricula.
- The author articulates that “adopting high-quality curriculum should be low-hanging fruit for school districts.”
- Labeled: HB 164 Research Colorado’s Curriculum Crackdown 1.25.2022

### **The Long-Term Effects of Universal Preschool in Boston by MIT Department of Economics.**

- Researchers use a randomized study to identify possible long and short-term effects of Boston’s Public Schools’ universal public preschool program.
- Researchers found that attending a public preschool had positive long-term and short-term effects on students.
- Labeled: HB 164 Research Long-Term Effects of Universal Preschool in Boston 1.25.2022
- Labeled: HB 164 Research Blueprint Labs Discussion Paper 2021.05 1.25.2022

# Colorado's curriculum crackdown

Dale Chu

---

1.6.2022



To start the year off on an upbeat note, Colorado's muscular effort to improve K–3 reading curriculum finally appears to be paying off. One of twenty states that passed or recently considered measures related to the science of reading, the Centennial State began cracking down on how its teacher preparation programs cover early literacy. It is now in the process of requiring teachers to demonstrate more in-depth knowledge about

reading pedagogy as well as tightening the reins on which reading programs may be used by districts. Last year, barely two in five of the state's many local districts used reading curricula from the state's list of approved programs. That has already risen to 63 percent.

The encouraging news can be traced back to Colorado's READ Act, a major law enacted ten years ago requiring districts to help struggling readers in the early grades. But laws are blunt instruments, particularly when it comes to improving classroom practice, and the READ Act was no exception. Frustrated by the slow rate of progress, lawmakers passed an update to the statute in 2019, which spurred the state to take a more assertive role in compelling districts to pick from the list of state-approved curricula. Notably, Colorado's four largest districts—Denver, Jefferson County, Douglas County, and Cherry Creek—have all recently publicized plans to adopt new elementary reading programs that adhere to reading science.

The state's department of education sent out dozens of letters last fall notifying districts that plans for complying with the curriculum requirement must be submitted later this month. Those that don't risk having their accreditation rating lowered—a toothless consequence by itself but one that could lead to greater sanctions down the road. Colorado districts have long enjoyed wide latitude on their curriculum choices—it's a "local control" state, after all—so it's not surprising that some districts have pushed back by playing games or disregarding the state's directives. But in a foreshadowing of what may be to come, the state's fifth largest district, Aurora Public Schools, made an abrupt about-face in December after arguing for months that the state's rules didn't apply to it. What's important to understand here is how and why Colorado's policy is getting results. Other states may have similar laws on the books, but they haven't yet seen this kind of response. So what's the secret? Four things come to mind.

The first was an unusual level of legislative involvement in the details of classroom teaching, emanating from both sides of the aisle. Consider just this one passage from the final law:

*Each [district] that enrolls students in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade shall provide to the students the instructional programming and services necessary to...develop the reading skills to enable them to master academic standards and expectations....The instructional programming and services for teaching students to*

*read must be evidence based and scientifically based and must focus on reading competency in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency including oral skills, and reading comprehension.*

I have mixed feelings about how heavy a hand state legislatures should take when it comes to the nuts and bolts of curriculum and instruction. Those of us who have had a hand on the switch when it comes to influencing state policy often have strong feelings about what is and isn't within the state's bailiwick. But if there's an exception, it might be in Colorado's unapologetic attention to reading in the early grades, where the battle to ensure the success of our students is largely won or lost.

Second, Colorado's elected state board of education—which is directly accountable to voters for shaping policy—has been animated by an urgency to raise reading proficiency scores. For example, a report commissioned last year to review the state's landmark reading law recommended giving districts more time to replace state-rejected reading materials because curriculum adoption is “expensive and time consuming.” Several state board members balked at the suggestion, with one saying, “Reading should be the highest priority that any school district has so they need to be allocating the resources to make the adjustment as soon as possible.” Another added, “Some of the [reading] programs that are in use are actually detrimental to the science of reading. I don't think we need any more time. I don't think we have any more time.”

Third, ongoing pressure applied by parents focused attention on the abysmal number of students reading at grade level as well as the barriers—including financial ones—that several districts had erected to obfuscate how literacy is taught. Indeed, officials in Jefferson County, the state's second largest district, initially reported that it didn't know what reading programs its schools used! Thanks to the efforts of COKID, a group of parents of children with dyslexia, among others, the legislature enacted a transparency bill requiring districts to submit information about their core and supplemental reading programs for posting on the state department's website.

Lastly, the news coverage about flawed instructional approaches galvanized by Emily Hanford's indispensable work sounded the clarion call. Curriculum reform advocates flogged her stuff to state lawmakers, district leaders, and other key stakeholders. Without Hanford's oeuvre, it's hard to imagine Colorado making progress at its recent pace. By

shining a spotlight on the deficiencies in how elementary schools approach teaching reading, she helped equip policymakers and parents alike with the tools to become knowledgeable and persuasive advocates for high-quality instructional materials.

The open question is how far can literacy laws move the needle on student learning. But good policy is always preferable to crappy policy, and adopting a high-quality curriculum should be low-hanging fruit for school districts, more so after receiving Uncle Sam's ESSER largesse. Although it remains to be seen how vigorously Colorado will continue to exercise its oversight over curriculum in the face of countervailing pressures to ease up, it's nonetheless heartening to see state leaders leaning in to ensure that schools employ sound methods for teaching children how to read. If they haven't already, more states should keep an eye on Colorado's curriculum reform efforts.

---

*POLICY PRIORITY: HIGH EXPECTATIONS*

---



# The Long-Term Effects of Universal Preschool in Boston

Guthrie Gray-Lobe  
Parag Pathak  
Christopher Walters

Policy Brief | May 2021

## Summary

High-quality early childhood education is increasingly viewed as an important and cost-effective intervention to address early-life deficits. New research from economists **Guthrie Gray-Lobe** (UChicago), **Parag Pathak** (MIT), and **Christopher Walters** (UC Berkeley) studies the short and long-run impacts of Boston Public Schools' universal public preschool program. It is the first study that uses a randomized research design to examine the long-term outcomes of children attending a large-scale program.

The researchers find that attending a Boston public preschool led to positive long-term impacts on educational attainment as attendees were more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college. The short-term effect

of preschool on test scores was minimal, but there was a substantial impact on student behavior. Effects were larger for boys but did not differ by race or income. As policymakers consider increased public investment in universal preschool, the research findings suggest that preschool can lead to long-term educational attainment gains through improvements in behavior. Furthermore, the observed effects across demographic groups suggest that all students are likely to benefit from universal preschool.

## Source

Gray-Lobe, G., Pathak, P. A., and C. R. Walters (2021): "The Long-Term Effects of Universal Preschool in Boston," *SEI Discussion Paper #2021.05*.



## Setting

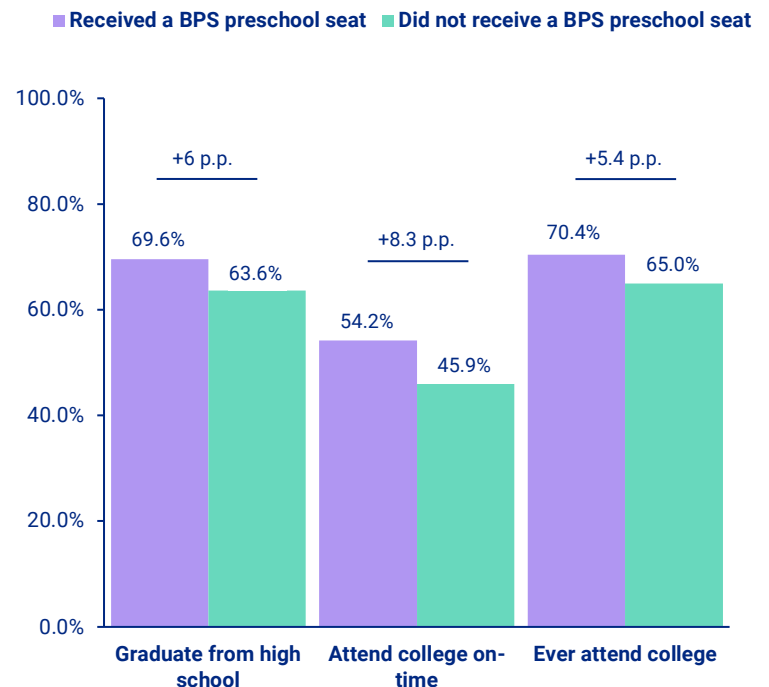
This work studies the impact of Boston Public Schools' (BPS) public preschool program using data on more than 4,000 preschool applicants from 1997 to 2003. The study leverages the randomization embedded in the BPS preschool lottery-based assignment process to compare the outcomes of students who won a preschool seat to students whose random lottery number was not high enough to win a seat. The study combines data from Boston Public Schools, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the National Student Clearinghouse.

### Key finding #1: Public preschool in Boston boosted educational attainment.

Students attending public preschool in Boston were more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college. Enrolling in preschool increased the likelihood that a student would ever graduate from high school by 6 percentage points. Similar impacts are evident with respect to college going. Preschool attendees were 8 percentage points more likely to attend college on-time, an effect driven by increased enrollment at four-year colleges and Massachusetts colleges.

Preschool enrollment also increased the likelihood of taking the SAT by 9 percentage points. Taken together, this represents consistent and substantial evidence of the impact of Boston public preschool on long-term educational attainment.

**Figure 1. Impact of Boston's public preschool program on educational attainment**



**How to read this figure:** The figure compares students who randomly won a preschool seat to those who did not win a seat. For example, lottery-winners attending preschool had a 6 percentage point higher high school graduation rate than the 63.6% rate for students who did not receive a high enough lottery number to attend preschool.

### Key finding #2: The short-term impacts of preschool are evident in student behavior but not test scores.

Boston public preschool had little detectable impact on elementary, middle, and high school state standardized test scores. Additionally, there was minimal effect on the likelihood that a student repeats a grade. This lack of short-term preschool effects contrasts with the findings on long-term educational attainment. However, the story evolves when the

**Table 1. Impact of Boston Public Schools' preschool program**

	Outcome	Impact of attending preschool	
Long-term educational attainment	Graduate high school	↑	6 percentage points <u>more</u> likely
	Take the SAT	↑	8.5 percentage points <u>more</u> likely
	Enroll in college on-time	↑	8.3 percentage points <u>more</u> likely
	Ever enroll in college	↑	5.4 percentage points <u>more</u> likely
Academic achievement	State standardized test scores	-	<i>No detectable impact</i>
	Repeat a grade	-	<i>No detectable impact</i>
Student behavior	Suspensions in high school	↓	0.24 <u>fewer</u> suspensions
	Juvenile incarceration	↓	0.8 percentage points <u>less</u> likely

**How to read this table:** The table compares students who randomly won a preschool seat to those who did not win a seat. For example, lottery-winners attending preschool had a 6 percentage point higher chance of graduating high school than students who did not receive a high enough lottery number to attend preschool.

researchers analyze short-term behavioral outcomes. Findings indicate that attending Boston public preschool reduced total high school suspensions and decreased the likelihood of ever being in juvenile incarceration. Although the study detected no impact of preschool on short-term test scores, the positive effects on student behavior suggest ongoing skill formation that culminates in higher long-term educational attainment.

**Key finding #3: The benefits of preschool are larger for boys than girls but do not differ by race and income.**

As a policymaker weighs an expansion of public preschool against budgetary constraints, a likely consideration is whether to offer universal preschool or a more targeted program for disadvantaged students. The researchers explore whether Boston public preschool has a differential impact by gender, race, or income. Both

boys and girls attending preschool have a higher chance of attending college, but the preschool effect is larger for boys. In contrast, there are no differences in preschool impact by race and income (as proxied by whether a student receives a free or reduced-price lunch). Notwithstanding the gender difference, this study suggests that all students – regardless of race or income – are likely to benefit from a universal preschool program.

**Future research**

Future work will explore the impact of preschool later in the student lifecycle and quantify the effect of public preschool on employment, earnings, and adult criminal activity. As policymakers consider public investment in preschool in a variety of settings, future studies will also evaluate the benefits of public preschool in sites other than Boston with more recent cohorts.