



## ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Löki Gale Tobin  
*Education Committee Chair*

EDUCATION  
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES  
JUDICIARY  
TRANSPORTATION

### **SB 93: Early Education Programs**

#### **Sponsor Statement**

The markers for success develop early in life and brain science underscores that how we use our brains at those crucial early years before we enter Kindergarten – as well as how prepared we are when we enter our K – 12 education -- have a dramatic impact on how well we will do in school and life. Research shows us that those who live in poverty have an incredibly difficult time catching up with others if they come to school ill-prepared. That same research shows that those who have a high-quality preschool experience tend to go on to future academic and personal success and are less likely to be incarcerated and or receive government assistance as adults.

Alaska's current pre-Kindergarten funding system includes many barriers that Bill 34 seeks to fix. It builds off success seen through the first few years of the AK Reads Act by removing limits on the number of pre-K students and district programs that can be funded in a year. It also changes the calculation of ADM to count pre- K students as full-time rather than one-half. With an ever-increasing childcare crisis and recognition that high quality early learning best prepares our future bankers, teachers, engineers, and heavy equipment operators for the world of work. This bill turbocharges early education programs in Alaska.

There is much to be said about early education, but the critical piece is that children's pace of intellectual development peaks before age six, making those years especially important for future success. School outcome data and academic research show that children who participate in early education programs exceed in developing soft skills tied to future success including conscientiousness, perseverance, sociability, and curiosity. Universal early education when available to students before they enter Kindergarten, improves school readiness, reading levels, and long-term economic performance.

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