

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 160(CRA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/24/95

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services, Finance

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES NICHOLIA, B.Davis, Ivan

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to a curriculum for Native language education; and providing
2 for an effective date."

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

4 * **Section 1.** SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the Native Language Education
5 Act.

6 * **Sec. 2.** FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

7 (1) Alaska's indigenous Native cultures and languages are unique, essential
8 elements of Alaska's heritage;

9 (2) Alaska's indigenous Native languages are an integral part of Alaska Native
10 people's culture and well-being;

11 (3) knowledge of one's indigenous language is important for the development
12 of social skills and self-esteem; it further contributes to the development of the individual, and
13 the ability to communicate;

14 (4) translations from a Native language into English result in the loss of

1 context and deprivation of the full range of social and cultural understanding necessary to
2 function in the individual's environment;

3 (5) when Native children are proficient in their primary indigenous language,
4 they are also more likely to develop a higher degree of proficiency in the English language;

5 (6) historically, Alaska Native children first learned their Native language in
6 their homes and communities but with the passing of Native elders and with a current
7 generation of parents who are not fluent in their Native language, younger generations are less
8 knowledgeable about their language and culture;

9 (7) the loss of indigenous Native languages dates back to the late 1800's when
10 mainstream American missionaries enforced federal policies that forbade the use of Native
11 languages, punished children for speaking their own language, and urged parents to speak only
12 English to their children;

13 (8) the continuation of "no Native language" policies in federal, territorial, and
14 state school systems between 1910 and 1970 resulted in the loss of many Native languages;

15 (9) the fact that only two of the 20 Alaska Native languages are fluently
16 spoken by children today is an indicator of the impending extinction of Native languages;

17 (10) unless action is taken, by the year 2055 only five of the 20 Alaska Native
18 languages will be spoken by anyone, and soon thereafter the Native languages of Alaska may
19 vanish.

20 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.03.120(e) is amended to read:

21 (e) A district shall, by October 31 of each year, provide to the state board, and
22 make available to the public, a report on the performance of each public school and
23 public school students in the district. The report shall [MUST] be entitled "School
24 District Report Card To The Public" and shall [MUST] be prepared on a form
25 prescribed by the department. The report must include

26 (1) the percent of district students in the top and bottom quarter of
27 standardized national achievement examinations; results under this paragraph shall be
28 disclosed in a manner that does not reveal the individual identities of students;

29 (2) the percent of students who are not promoted to the next grade;

30 (3) student, parent, and community member comments on the school's
31 performance;

1 (4) the annual percent change in enrollment and the percent of
2 enrollment change due to student transfers into and out of the district;

3 (5) attendance, retention, and graduation rates;

4 (6) the ways in which meaningful parent involvement in school
5 performance was achieved;

6 (7) a summary and evaluation of the environmental education
7 curriculum described in AS 14.30.380;

8 (8) **if Native language education is provided, a summary and**
9 **evaluation of the curriculum described in AS 14.30.420;**

10 (9) other indicators of school performance required by the state board;
11 and

12 (10) [(9)] other indicators of school performance selected by the
13 district.

14 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding a new section to article 6 to read:

15 Sec. 14.30.420. NATIVE LANGUAGE EDUCATION. (a) A school board
16 in a district in which a majority of the students are Alaska Natives shall establish a
17 local Native language curriculum advisory board for each school in the district in
18 which a majority of the students are Alaska Natives. If the local Native language
19 curriculum advisory board recommends the establishment of a Native language
20 education curriculum for a school, the school board may initiate and conduct a Native
21 language education curriculum within grades K through 12 at that school. The
22 program, if established, must include Native languages traditionally spoken in the
23 community in which the school is located. Each school board conducting a program
24 of Native language education shall implement the program as a part of regular
25 classroom studies and shall utilize

26 (1) instructors who are certified under AS 14.20.020 or 14.20.025; and

27 (2) to the extent possible

28 (A) instructors and instructional materials available through the
29 University of Alaska; and

30 (B) audio-visual, computer and satellite technology.

31 (b) In this section,

- 1 (1) "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.250;
- 2 (2) "Native" means a person of one-fourth degree or more Alaskan
- 3 Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut blood.
- 4 * **Sec. 5.** This Act takes effect July 1, 1996.