

SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 203

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR TAYLOR

Introduced: 3/5/98

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, word-attack
2 skills, spelling, vocabulary, use of decodable text, reading comprehension strategies,
3 and testing for basic reading and reading comprehension skills in the public
4 school system."

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

6 * **Section 1.** PURPOSE. It is the purpose of this Act to ensure that all public school
7 elementary students receive adequate language education. If the public school students of a
8 school district fall below the national average for language education, it is also the purpose
9 of this Act to encourage the school district to adopt intensive systematic phonics and spelling
10 instruction in the elementary school curriculum, along with other methods of instruction, in
11 order to increase skills in reading, writing, and spelling.

12 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding a new section to read:

13 **Article 12. Language Education.**

14 **Sec. 14.30.800. Language education curriculum.** (a) All students in the

1 first, second, and third grades shall be tested for basic reading and reading
2 comprehension skills, using a nationally normed group-administered test approved by
3 the department. Testing shall be conducted in the fall of each school year. The
4 individual results of tests required under this subsection must be provided to each
5 student's parent or guardian and to the principal of the school. Results for each grade
6 level in the school must be provided to each student's parent or guardian, to the school
7 district, to the commissioner, and to the legislature. A student in the first, second, or
8 third grade who tests at or in the lowest 25 percent of the nationally normed test, or
9 a student who a parent or teacher believes has a reading, writing, spelling, or math
10 learning problem, shall also be tested for word-attack and word identification skills,
11 vocabulary, and reading comprehension, using a nationally normed and individually
12 administered test approved by the department.

13 (b) If a majority of the students in a grade level tested under (a) of this section
14 tests at or below the 25th percentile of the nationally tested students for three
15 consecutive school years, a governing body shall include intensive systematic phonics
16 and spelling instruction in the curriculum for elementary school. The language
17 education curriculum must include, in addition to children's literature, explicit,
18 systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, word-attack
19 skills, spelling, vocabulary, use of decodable text, and reading comprehension
20 strategies.