

**CS FOR SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 203(HES)**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Offered: 4/9/98

Referred: Finance

Sponsor(s): SENATOR TAYLOR

**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

7 (1) ensure that all public school elementary students receive adequate language  
8 arts education;

9 (2) require school districts to adopt a balanced approach to language arts  
10 instruction that includes intensive systematic phonics and spelling instruction in the elementary  
11 school curriculum, along with other methods of instruction, in order to increase skills in  
12 reading, writing, and spelling; and

13 (3) encourage elementary schools to begin preparing public school students for  
14 the high school graduation examination.

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

2 **Article 12. Language Arts Education.**

3 **Sec. 14.30.800. Language arts education curriculum.** (a) All students in  
4 the second and third grades shall be tested for basic reading and reading  
5 comprehension skills using a nationally normed test approved by the department. A  
6 district may test students in the first grade as described in this subsection. Testing  
7 shall be conducted in the fall of each school year. The individual results of tests  
8 required under this subsection must be provided to each student's parent or guardian  
9 and to the principal of the school. Results for each grade level in the school must be  
10 provided to each student's parent or guardian, to the school district, to the  
11 commissioner, and to the legislature. A student in the first, second, or third grade who  
12 tests at or in the lowest 25 percent of the nationally normed test, or a student who a  
13 parent or teacher believes has a reading, writing, spelling, or math learning deficiency,  
14 shall also be tested for word-attack and word identification skills, vocabulary, and  
15 reading comprehension, using a nationally normed and individually administered test  
16 approved by the department.

17 (b) If a student tested under (a) of this section tests at or below the 25th  
18 percentile of the nationally tested students, a governing body shall establish an  
19 alternative instructional program in language arts that is intended to improve the  
20 student's basic reading and reading comprehension skills. The alternative instructional  
21 program must include, in addition to children's literature, explicit, systematic  
22 instruction in phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, word-attack skills,  
23 spelling, vocabulary, use of decodable text, and reading comprehension strategies.

24 (c) Upon request, the department shall provide a list of those nationally  
25 normed tests that are approved by the department.