



LAWS OF ALASKA

2000

Source
HCS SB 103(HES)

Chapter No.
29

AN ACT

Relating to a curriculum for Native language education; and providing for an effective date.

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

THE ACT FOLLOWS ON PAGE 1

Approved by the Governor: May 11, 2000
Actual Effective Date: July 1, 2000

AN ACT

1 Relating to a curriculum for Native language education; and providing for an effective date.

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3 * Section 1. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new
4 section to read:

5 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the Native Language Education Act.

6 * Sec. 2. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
7 to read:

8 FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

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

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

13 (3) knowledge of one's indigenous language is important for the development

Chapter 29

- 1 of social skills and self-esteem; it further contributes to the development of the individual and
2 the ability to communicate;
- 3 (4) translations from a Native language into English result in the loss of
4 context and deprivation of the full range of social and cultural understanding necessary to
5 function in the individual's environment;
- 6 (5) when Native children are proficient in their primary indigenous language,
7 they are more likely to do well in school; they also develop a higher degree of proficiency in
8 English;
- 9 (6) historically, Alaska Native children first learned their Native language in
10 their homes and communities, but, with the passing of Native elders and with a current
11 generation of parents who are not fluent in their Native language, younger generations are less
12 knowledgeable about their language and culture;
- 13 (7) the loss of indigenous Native languages dates back to the late 1800's when
14 mainstream American missionaries enforced federal policies that forbade the use of Native
15 languages, punished children for speaking their own language, and urged parents to speak only
16 English to their children;
- 17 (8) the continuation of "no Native language" policies in federal, territorial, and
18 state school systems between 1910 and 1970 resulted in the loss of many Native languages;
- 19 (9) the fact that only two of the 20 Alaska Native languages are fluently
20 spoken by children today is an indicator of the impending extinction of Native languages;
- 21 (10) unless action is taken, by the year 2055 only five of the 20 Alaska Native
22 languages will be spoken by anyone, and soon thereafter the Native languages of Alaska may
23 vanish.

24 * Sec. 3. AS 14.03.120(d) is amended to read:

25 (d) Annually, before the date set by the district under (e) of this section, each
26 public school shall provide, in a public meeting of parents, students, and community
27 members, a report on the school's performance and the performance of the school's
28 students. The report shall be prepared on a form prescribed by the department and
29 must include

- 30 (1) information on accreditation;
- 31 (2) results of norm-referenced achievement tests;

1 (3) results of state standards-based assessments in reading, writing, and
2 mathematics;

3 (4) a description, including quantitative and qualitative measures, of
4 student, parent, community, and business involvement in student learning;

5 (5) a description of the school's attendance, retention, dropout, and
6 graduation rates as specified by the state board; [AND]

7 (6) the annual percent of enrollment change, regardless of reason, and
8 the annual percent of enrollment change due to student transfers into and out of the
9 school district; and

10 (7) if Native language education is provided, a summary and
11 evaluation of the curriculum described in AS 14.30.420.

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

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

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

26 (2) to the maximum extent possible

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

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

30 (b) In this section,

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

Chapter 29

- 1 (2) "Native" means a person of one-fourth degree or more Alaskan
- 2 Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut blood.
- 3 * Sec. 5. This Act takes effect July 1, 2000.