

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

February 11, 2002
1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Lyda Green, Chair
Senator Loren Leman, Vice Chair
Senator Gary Wilken
Senator Jerry Ward
Senator Bettye Davis

MEMBERS ABSENT

All Members Present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 250

"An Act extending the dates for assignment of performance designations of public schools and the dates for reports and monitoring based on those designations; and providing for an effective date."

HEARD AND HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

SB 250 - See HESS minutes dated 1/30/02.

WITNESS REGISTER

Dr. Mark Leal
Department of Education &
Early Development
801 W 10th St.
Juneau, AK 99801-1894

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions about SB 250.

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 02-7, SIDE A

Number 001

CHAIRWOMAN LYDA GREEN called the Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Present were Senators Wilken, Ward and Green. She announced that SB 250 was before the committee and asked if members had any questions

or comments.

#SB 250

SB 250-SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

SENATOR WILKEN referred to the school designator report cards generated by the Department of Education and Early Development (DOEED) in 1994-1995, 1998-1999 and the most recent reports posted on its website. He noted the first report contains excellent information while the second report offers virtually no useful information and the reports on the website provide no way to compare information among schools or districts. He asked if the school designator reports will continue to "slide down to what amounts to minimalist information" and whether something should be added to SB 250 to clarify what the legislature expects from the report card report.

DR. MARK LEAL, DOEED, said he believes the biggest shift that occurred in the school report cards happened last year when, by statute, DOEED had to begin reporting at the individual school level. He agreed that DOEED could do an analysis of districts but he is not familiar with the rationale behind the legislation that changed the focus from districts to schools. He stated that reporting by school raises confidentiality issues, particularly for very small schools. He believes DOEED has made a conscientious effort to gather and report the information by school and meet the statutory requirement.

DR. LEAL referred to a handout he provided to committee members, a sample Alaska School Report Card (green), and said it reflects the comments of many parents, teachers and community members that school designations need to be based on more than test scores. The categories on the right side of the report show information in addition to the test scores.

SENATOR WILKEN referred to language on page 1, lines 9-11, of SB 250 and asked Dr. Leal, "Is this what is promised or called out in the legislation as we see it today?"

DR. LEAL replied:

The information right now is some of the items of school quality that are on the - that are on the right - the attendance. I don't have the specific legislation in front of me but I know that the department was careful to make sure that all the required test scores were included on those school report cards but I don't have the current school report

card in front of me to be able to comment on that.

SENATOR WILKEN asked how to tell from SB 250 what the public will see on the report card in two years.

DR. LEAL said one can't tell. He added the reason DOEED is talking about the school report card is that the designators must be reported on it; that is where the two are tied.

SENATOR WILKEN asked if the information contained on the report card is listed in statute.

DR. LEAL said that AS 14.03.078 contains a list of the information about each school that is required.

SENATOR WILKEN asked if that list is referenced on page 1, line 11, of SB 250.

CHAIRWOMAN GREEN indicated that committee members need a comparison of the 1994-1995 law and current statute. She asked Senator Wilken if he is requesting that DOEED do an overview report of what is happening in school districts in addition to individual school reports.

SENATOR WILKEN said that individual school reports are necessary as is a basis of comparison but there is no way to do a comparison. He stated:

Maybe we're at a spot at the transition from district to school to the designators that brings us back to have some information that's valuable. What I don't want to do is have an opportunity - this bill, SB 250 - to go by this committee and then two years from now we say, we really didn't ask them what we wanted to know. That's what I was getting at. It seems back in [SB] 133, which we did last year, it's called out on these two pages.

He asked Chairwoman Green to hold the bill in committee so that he can report to the committee what the designators will be and how they will be reported.

CHAIRWOMAN GREEN agreed and said it will most likely be scheduled again on February 20.

1:47 p.m.

SENATOR DAVIS said she thought DOEED was supposed to provide

members information about what the designator committee decided was to be in the report.

DR. LEAL referred to the handouts and said what the designator committee envisions is contained on the sample report card. He explained that the designation would be based on student achievement, status and growth score, and persistence and drop out rate. Other items would be reported but not factored in.

SENATOR WILKEN noted the other handouts contain an update on what the designator committee has done.

DR. LEAL said the first document is a two-page summary of the background and what the designator committee wanted to include as part of the school designator; the second document answers questions that have been raised about the school designator system; the third is the sample report card, which puts the dual requirements of designating schools and reporting on schools together on the school report card.

CHAIRWOMAN GREEN asked if the school report card will use the format of the sample.

DR. LEAL said he anticipates the left column will look the same but more space will be needed for narrative to report the school quality sections.

CHAIRWOMAN GREEN asked if the school itself will be receiving a score in the Grade 3 Benchmark category column.

DR. LEAL said that is correct and explained that a designation will be calculated based on averaging the status and growth together.

CHAIRWOMAN GREEN asked if the results of this year's tests will be available.

DR. LEAL said they will.

CHAIRWOMAN GREEN asked if anything in statute prohibits DOEED from producing an overview publication or whether that requirement was deleted from statute.

DR. LEAL said he would research that question.

SENATOR DAVIS asked for a copy of the 1994-1995 publication.

CHAIRWOMAN GREEN said she wonders if the requirement for a

district overview publication was dropped from statute inadvertently.

SENATOR WILKEN said it may have occurred as part of the change made in SB 36, which created the designators. He said that is fine as long as legislators know what they can expect two years out.

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There being no further discussion, CHAIRWOMAN GREEN announced that the committee will take up SB 256 on Wednesday, February 13. She then adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m.