

HOUSE BILL NO. 302

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES GARA, Kerttula

Introduced: 5/7/03

Referred: House Special Committee on Education, Health, Education and Social Services, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to a maximum pupil-teacher ratio in public schools; relating to duties**
2 **of school boards; and providing for an effective date."**

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

4 *** Section 1.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

5 **Sec. 14.03.065. Maximum effective class size.** (a) In a public school class,
6 other than an art, library, music, computer science, vocational-technical, honors-level,
7 or physical education class, the ratio of pupils to a teacher may not exceed 18 to one in
8 a class in grades kindergarten through six, and 23 to one in a class in grades seven
9 through 12.

10 (b) The pupil-teacher ratio required under this section does not apply

11 (1) during the final eight weeks of each school year;

12 (2) during a fiscal year in which the governing body determines in
13 writing that the legislature has not appropriated sufficient money to implement the
14 requirements of this section; a decision of a governing body under this paragraph is

1 final and may not be appealed to the superior court;

2 (3) to classroom space in a school district that exists on the effective
3 date of this Act and that is not large enough to accommodate the ratios specified under
4 (a) of this section; or

5 (4) if the governing body determines in writing that compliance with
6 the ratios under (a) of this section would hinder the ability of the district to best
7 educate its pupils, given available funding.

8 (c) A district shall

9 (1) annually report to the department the district's ratio of pupils to a
10 teacher in each grade; the ratio reported shall be the average of the daily ratio taken
11 over the same period in October that is used to determine average daily membership
12 under AS 14.17.600; and

13 (2) by February 1 of each year, provide written notice to each student's
14 parent or guardian of the average class size goals of this section and the actual average
15 class size for each grade at each school in the district; the district shall determine what
16 day or days shall be used to calculate the actual average class size information
17 required under this paragraph; the notice required under this paragraph may be
18 provided by mail to a student's parent or guardian, or by delivery to a student.

19 (d) In this section,

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

21 (2) "teacher" means a person who is certified under AS 14.20.020 and
22 who is an actual classroom teacher in a regular instructional program.

23 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.14.090 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

24 (11) design school construction projects in order to comply with the
25 pupil-teacher ratios required under AS 14.03.065; this paragraph does not preclude a
26 school board from designing school construction projects to accommodate larger class
27 sizes.

28 * **Sec. 3.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
29 read:

30 TRANSITION. Before July 1, 2006, notwithstanding AS 14.03.065, enacted in sec. 1
31 of this Act, the ratio of pupils to a teacher in a class may be higher than the ratio required

1 under AS 14.03.065, enacted by sec. 1 of this Act, if the actual number of pupils in the present
2 class has declined by two or more when compared to pupils in the same class and grade in the
3 previous school year.

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

6 **APPLICABILITY.** Section 2 of this Act

7 (1) applies to all public schools designed on or after July 1, 2006; and

8 (2) does not require alteration or renovation of public schools or classrooms
9 that were designed on or before the effective date of this Act and does not require alteration to
10 the design or construction of schools that are completed before July 1, 2006.

11 * **Sec. 5.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2003.