

HOUSE BILL NO. 69

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

BY REPRESENTATIVES TUCK, PETERSEN, KAWASAKI, AND GARA, Muñoz

Introduced: 1/20/09

Referred: Education, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act establishing in the Department of Education and Early Development a**
2 **voluntary parent education home visiting program for pre-elementary aged children;**
3 **and establishing a rating system for early childhood education."**

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

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

7 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the Alaska Parents as Teachers Act.

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

10 FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

11 (1) a parent is a child's first and most influential teacher;

12 (2) a parent's ability to enhance a child's development and ability to enter
13 school ready to succeed can be significantly enhanced through parent education and family
14 support that will help parents prepare their child to succeed in school;

1 (3) undiagnosed and unaddressed developmental and health problems can
 2 impede overall development and school readiness and can contribute to grade retention for a
 3 child;

4 (4) early childhood home visits can lead to positive outcomes for children and
 5 families, including increased school readiness, sustained school success, improved child
 6 health and development, positive parenting practices, and reductions in child maltreatment.

7 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to article 1 to read:

8 **Sec. 14.03.165. Parent education home visiting program.** (a) The statewide
 9 voluntary parent education home visiting program is established in the department.
 10 The program shall be implemented through an implementation plan submitted by a
 11 local agency and approved by the department to provide home visits and resource
 12 information to participating parents of a pre-elementary aged child, birth through five
 13 years of age.

14 (b) The program must include

15 (1) home visits to a participant's home or a mutually agreed on location
 16 by a qualified caseworker employed by a local agency not less than once a month
 17 unless

18 (A) the caseworker determines that more frequent visits are
 19 required to provide indentified services; or

20 (B) available funding is insufficient to provide monthly visits;

21 (2) parent group meetings, arranged by the local agency, to occur not
 22 less than once a month;

23 (3) annual developmental and health screenings as recommended by
 24 the Department of Health and Social Services;

25 (4) referrals to and information on available community resources;

26 (5) research and evidence based interventions;

27 (6) program outcomes that demonstrate, five years or less after
 28 implementation of the program,

29 (A) enhanced school readiness;

30 (B) increased parent understanding of child development and
 31 developmental milestones;

1 (C) a reduction in the incidence of child abuse and neglect;

2 (D) increased identification of health problems and
3 developmental delays through regular screenings;

4 (E) improvement of child health indicators, including
5 immunization rates; and

6 (F) increased parental involvement.

7 (c) A local agency may apply for funding to provide services under the
8 program by submitting an implementation plan for review and approval by the
9 department. The implementation plan must include

10 (1) an outline of the agency's plans for delivering the services required
11 for the program under (b) of this section;

12 (2) a description of the collaborative agreements the agency will form
13 with community service providers to meet the needs of the families participating in the
14 program;

15 (3) a needs assessment for the community to be served by the agency;

16 (4) an annual evaluation of and reporting on the program that includes
17 the

18 (A) number of families and children served;

19 (B) number of aggregate visits and average number of visits
20 conducted for each family;

21 (C) demographic information for participating families;

22 (D) number and type of health and developmental delays
23 identified;

24 (E) number of group parent meetings held;

25 (F) average cost for each family served;

26 (G) number of children screened and receiving referrals for
27 further evaluation; and

28 (H) the number of referrals to other community organizations
29 and resources.

30 (d) The department shall adopt regulations to implement this program,
31 including standards for the qualification and approval of caseworkers that require

1 fingerprinting and criminal justice history screening of applicants.

2 (e) In this section,

3 (1) "developmental and health screening" means the process of
4 measuring the progress of a child to determine whether the child suffers a delay or
5 potential delay in normal development or is advanced in one or more areas of
6 development including understanding and use of language, perception through sight or
7 hearing, motor development and hand-eye coordination, health, and physical
8 development;

9 (2) "local agency" means a school district, regional educational
10 attendance area, or a not for profit organization that provides community services.

11 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.07.020(a) is amended to read:

12 (a) The department shall

13 (1) exercise general supervision over the public schools of the state
14 except the University of Alaska;

15 (2) study the conditions and needs of the public schools of the state,
16 adopt or recommend plans, administer and evaluate grants to improve school
17 performance awarded under AS 14.03.125, and adopt regulations for the improvement
18 of the public schools;

19 (3) provide advisory and consultative services to all public school
20 governing bodies and personnel;

21 (4) prescribe by regulation a minimum course of study for the public
22 schools; the regulations must provide that, if a course in American Sign Language is
23 given, the course shall be given credit as a course in a foreign language;

24 (5) establish, in coordination with the Department of Health and Social
25 Services, a program for the continuing education of children who are held in detention
26 facilities in the state during the period of detention;

27 (6) accredit those public schools that meet accreditation standards
28 prescribed by regulation by the department; these regulations shall be adopted by the
29 department and presented to the legislature during the first 10 days of any regular
30 session, and become effective 45 days after presentation or at the end of the session,
31 whichever is earlier, unless disapproved by a resolution concurred in by a majority of

1 the members of each house;

2 (7) prescribe by regulation, after consultation with the state fire
3 marshal and the state sanitarian, standards that will assure healthful and safe
4 conditions in the public and private schools of the state, including a requirement of
5 physical examinations and immunizations in pre-elementary schools; the standards for
6 private schools may not be more stringent than those for public schools;

7 (8) exercise general supervision over pre-elementary schools that
8 receive direct state or federal funding;

9 (9) exercise general supervision over elementary and secondary
10 correspondence study programs offered by municipal school districts or regional
11 educational attendance areas; the department may also offer and make available to any
12 Alaskan through a centralized office a correspondence study program;

13 (10) accredit private schools that request accreditation and that meet
14 accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; nothing in this
15 paragraph authorizes the department to require religious or other private schools to be
16 licensed;

17 (11) review plans for construction of new public elementary and
18 secondary schools and for additions to and major rehabilitation of existing public
19 elementary and secondary schools and, in accordance with regulations adopted by the
20 department, determine and approve the extent of eligibility for state aid of a school
21 construction or major maintenance project; for the purposes of this paragraph, "plans"
22 include educational specifications, schematic designs, and final contract documents;

23 (12) provide educational opportunities in the areas of vocational
24 education and training, and basic education to individuals over 16 years of age who
25 are no longer attending school;

26 (13) administer the grants awarded under AS 14.11;

27 (14) establish, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety, a
28 school bus driver training course;

29 (15) require the reporting of information relating to school disciplinary
30 and safety programs under AS 14.33.120 and of incidents of disruptive or violent
31 behavior;

1 (16) establish by regulation criteria, based on low student performance,
2 under which the department may intervene in a school district to improve instructional
3 practices, as described in AS 14.07.030(14) or (15); the regulations must include

4 (A) a notice provision that alerts the district to the deficiencies
5 and the instructional practice changes proposed by the department;

6 (B) an end date for departmental intervention, as described in
7 AS 14.07.030(14)(A) and (B) and (15), after the district demonstrates three
8 consecutive years of improvement consisting of not less than two percent
9 increases in student proficiency on standards-based assessments in math,
10 reading, and writing as provided in AS 14.03.123(f)(2)(A); and

11 (C) a process for districts to petition the department for
12 continuing or discontinuing the department's intervention;

13 (17) notify the legislative committees having jurisdiction over
14 education before intervening in a school district under AS 14.07.030(14) or redirecting
15 public school funding under AS 14.07.030(15);

16 **(18) devise and implement a statewide early childhood education**
17 **rating system to assess, improve, and publicize the quality of all public and**
18 **private pre-elementary programs in the state; the system must rate providers on**
19 **a scale of one to five according to effectiveness in achieving early learning goals;**

20 **(19) establish standards and provide technical assistance and**
21 **oversight for the statewide parent education home visiting program under**
22 **AS 14.03.165.**