

SENATE BILL NO. 194

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Introduced: 2/8/12

Referred: Education, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act providing for a school improvement and revitalization procedure in the
2 Department of Education and Early Development; establishing advisory councils for
3 school improvement; and requiring reports to the legislature."

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

5 * **Section 1.** AS 14.03.123(d) is amended to read:

6 (d) A public school or district that **is designated as a low-performing school**
7 **or district** [RECEIVES A LOW PERFORMANCE DESIGNATION UNDER THIS
8 SECTION] shall prepare and submit to the department a school or district
9 improvement plan, as applicable, **and shall cooperate with the department,** in
10 accordance with **AS 14.03.124 and** regulations adopted by the board. The
11 improvement plan must be prepared with the maximum feasible public participation of
12 the community, including, as appropriate, interested individuals, teachers, parents,
13 parent organizations, students, tribal organizations, local government representatives,
14 and other community groups.

1 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.123(g) is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

2 (3) "low-performing" means the bottom three percent in the state for
3 performance based on the accountability measures described in (f)(2) of this section.

4 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.03.123 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

5 (h) The department shall work with and evaluate a public school or district
6 that receives a low performance designation under (d) of this section to improve the
7 school or district as follows:

8 (1) supply the school or district with a person who has training and
9 experience in education and who can provide one-on-one assistance to enhance the
10 quality of education in the school or district;

11 (2) provide an operations audit to identify possible programmatic
12 savings and review the manner in which financial resources are being directed;

13 (3) direct the local school board to use state and federal funds for
14 critical needs, as directed by the state Board of Education and Early Development;

15 (4) provide incentives to attract highly qualified teachers and
16 principals;

17 (5) provide additional training and technical assistance for parents and
18 guardians of children attending the school or schools in the district and for teachers,
19 principals, and central office staff hired by the district;

20 (6) provide targeted resources for graduation success as requested by
21 the local school board;

22 (7) direct the local school board to identify model curriculum,
23 including recommended textbooks, materials, and supplies approved by the
24 department; if a new curriculum is required, the department shall provide technical
25 assistance to implement the curriculum;

26 (8) work with the local school board to develop and implement a plan
27 to address deficits in achievement and in the learning environment as recommended in
28 the academic performance audit conducted under (i) of this section;

29 (9) assign a technical assistance team to the school or district to guide
30 school or district initiatives and report progress to the commissioner;

31 (10) establish instructional and learning environment benchmarks for

the school or district to meet as it progresses toward removal of the designation of low-performing schools or districts;

(11) direct the establishment of learning cohorts in schools that require continuous monitoring of student performance by teacher groups;

(12) provide training to local school boards through the Association of Alaska School Boards to improve their operational efficiency and effectiveness as leaders of their districts in ensuring delivery of quality education, and require local school boards to submit to the commissioner an annual action plan that outlines when and the manner in which the local school board's effectiveness will be monitored.

(i) For two years following a designation of a school or district as low performing, the department shall contract with an external review team to conduct an academic performance audit of the district and each low-performing school in the district to identify the potential reasons for the school's low performance and lack of progress. The review team shall consist of persons who have expertise in comprehensive school and district reform. A review team may not include staff of the school district that is the subject of the audit or staff of the department. The review team shall meet with and report to the department and the superintendent of the district.

(j) The audit required under (i) of this section shall be conducted based on criteria developed by the department in the areas of curriculum, assessment, instruction, learning environment, professional development, and leadership and must include an examination of the following:

- (1) student demographics;
- (2) mobility patterns;
- (3) school feeder patterns;
- (4) strategic allocation of resources;
- (5) high standards and expectations for all students;
- (6) high level of collaboration and communication;
- (7) frequency of monitoring of learning and teaching;
- (8) high level of family and community involvement;
- (9) alternative secondary schools best practices; and

(10) any unique circumstances or characteristics of the school or district, including substance abuse and other social factors.

(k) The department shall make audit findings available to the audited school district and staff, the local community, and the state Board of Education and Early Development.

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

Sec. 14.03.124. Revitalization designation; plan; governance council. (a)

For a public school or district that, after three consecutive years of school improvement efforts under AS 14.03.123(d) and (h) - (k), continues to be a low-performing school, as described in AS 14.03.123, the department shall

(1) designate the school or district as a revitalization school or district;

(2) continue to identify a revitalization school or district and operate under a school revitalization plan developed by the department and the district until taken off revitalization status;

(3) assist the local school board with developing and implementing a revitalization plan as provided under this section;

(4) maintain eligibility of the school or district for available federal and state aid; and

(5) establish a superintendent cohort made up of the superintendent of the revitalization district and two superintendents of districts in the state that are not in revitalization status; the superintendent cohort shall meet regularly and, within nine months after the revitalization designation, report to the governance council established under this section.

(b) A school or district that has not been designated as a revitalization school or district may request the establishment of a governance council for a school in the district or for the district consistent with this section.

(c) A local school board that governs a school or district that has been designated as a revitalization school or district shall establish a governance council for each school designated for revitalization. Except as provided in (d) of this section, a governance council for a school shall consist of members appointed by the local school board, only one of whom may be a current school board member, as follows:

1 (1) four parents or guardians of students attending the school,
2 nominated by parents or guardians of the school;

3 (2) four community leaders residing within the school district,
4 nominated by the members selected under (1) and (3) of this subsection;

5 (3) two teachers at the school, nominated by teachers at the school;

6 (4) one representative from the department;

7 (5) one to four principals of the schools in the district or the principals'
8 designees; and

9 (6) the superintendent of the district or a representative of the
10 superintendent cohort established under (a)(5) of this section.

11 (d) If a district has only one operating school, the district may petition the
12 department for a reduction of the governance council membership from four parents to
13 two parents, from four community leaders to one community leader, and from two
14 teachers to one teacher.

15 (e) Terms of members of the governance council selected under (c) or (d) of
16 this section shall be for two years, and no member shall serve more than two terms on
17 the council. Members of the governance council serve without compensation but are
18 entitled to per diem and other expenses authorized for boards and commissions under
19 AS 39.20.180.

20 (f) A governance council shall, in conjunction with the department and the
21 superintendent cohort established under (a)(5) of this section,

22 (1) analyze school achievement data and school needs related to the
23 improvement plan for the school prepared under AS 14.03.123(d);

24 (2) meet with and review the report of the superintendent cohort
25 established under (a)(5) of this section;

26 (3) participate in the hiring process of the school principal or other
27 administrators of the school by conducting interviews of candidates and reporting the
28 results of the interviews to the superintendent of schools for the school district and to
29 the local school board;

30 (4) assist the principal of the school in making programmatic and
31 operational changes to improve the school's achievement, including adjustments in

1 program, school hours and days of operation, and enrollment goals for the school;

2 (5) work with the school administration to develop and approve a
3 school compact for parents and legal guardians and students that includes an outline of
4 the criteria and responsibilities for enrollment and school membership consistent with
5 the school's goals and academic focus, including means by which parents and school
6 personnel may build a partnership to improve student learning;

7 (6) develop and approve a written parent involvement policy that
8 outlines the role of parents and legal guardians in the school;

9 (7) if the governance council determines it necessary to recommend
10 intervention by the department, work with the department to develop an intervention
11 plan for the school involving available local, regional, and statewide resources;

12 (8) prepare a revitalization model that takes into account
13 recommendations consistent with the duties in (1) - (7) of this subsection for review
14 and a vote as provided under (i) of this section.

15 (g) A governance council may

16 (1) review the annual draft prepared under AS 14.03.120(a) detailing
17 the goals described in the education plan and provide advice to the principal of the
18 school before submitting the report to the superintendent of schools;

19 (2) assist the principal of the school in developing a revitalization plan
20 before the plan is submitted to the superintendent of schools and cooperate with the
21 department in developing a revitalization plan;

22 (3) assist the principal of the school in developing, conducting, and
23 reporting the results of an annual survey of parents, guardians, and teachers on issues
24 related to the school climate and conditions; and

25 (4) provide advice to the principal of the school on any other major
26 policy matters affecting the school, except on any matters relating to a collective
27 bargaining agreement between the exclusive bargaining unit for teachers.

28 (h) A local school board, in conjunction with the department shall provide
29 appropriate training and instruction to members of the governance council to aid them
30 in the execution of their duties.

31 (i) Not later than 30 days after a governance council informs the local school

board of the completion of a revitalization model under (f) of this section, the local school board shall hold a public hearing to discuss the revitalization model and shall, at the next regularly scheduled meeting, conduct a vote to accept the model recommended by the governance council, select an alternative model, or maintain the current school status, as follows:

(1) if the local school board selects an alternative model, not later than 10 days after the vote of the local school board, the board shall meet with the governance council to discuss an agreement on the local school board's alternative revitalization model;

(2) if no agreement can be achieved, not later than 45 days after the last meeting between the local school board and the governance council, the department shall decide whether to adopt the council's revitalization model or the local school board's alternative revitalization model to implement;

(3) if the local school board votes to maintain the current school status, not later than 45 days after a vote of the local school board, the department shall decide whether to implement the revitalization model recommended by the governance council or to maintain the current school status; if the final decision of the local school board is to adopt the revitalization model, the local school board shall implement the approved model during the subsequent school year in conformance with state statutes and regulations and the provisions specified in federal regulations and guidelines for schools subject to corrective action under 20 U.S.C. 6316(b)(7) (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965), as amended, or other applicable federal laws or regulations.

(j) Within two years after a local school board votes on a revitalization model, the department shall, within available appropriations, monitor the schools and districts that have been designated as revitalization schools or districts for demonstrable progress, applying the following indicators:

- (1) the revitalization model adopted by the school;
- (2) the number and type of disciplinary incidents;
- (3) the number of truants;
- (4) the dropout rate;

- 1 (5) the student attendance rate;
- 2 (6) the average scale scores on the statewide secondary school
- 3 graduation qualifying examination;
- 4 (7) for high schools, the number and percentage of students completing
- 5 advanced placement coursework;
- 6 (8) the teacher retention rate; and
- 7 (9) the existence and size of the parent-teacher organization for the
- 8 school.

9 (k) On or before July 1 of each odd-numbered year, the department shall
10 report to the standing committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over education

11 (1) the number of governance councils that have initiated
12 revitalization;

13 (2) a comparison of the governance councils that have initiated
14 revitalization and those that have not; and

15 (3) whether parental involvement has increased at schools with
16 governance councils.

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

19 SCHOOL REVITALIZATION; REPORTS TO THE LEGISLATURE. (a) On or
20 before January 1, 2014, the Department of Education and Early Development shall report to
21 the standing committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over education on

22 (1) the monitoring conducted under AS 14.03.124(j), added by sec. 4 of this
23 Act;

24 (2) recommendations relating to changes in the revitalization options available
25 to schools, including whether governance councils may continue to recommend revitalization;

26 (3) comparison of the revitalization models adopted; and

27 (4) the level of progress of schools adopting each revitalization model in
28 relation to the indicators described in AS 14.03.124, added by sec. 4 of this Act.

29 (b) On or before January 1, 2018, the Department of Education and Early
30 Development shall evaluate the governance councils established under AS 14.03.124, added
31 by sec. 4 of this Act, for compliance with that section. On or before October 1, 2019, the

- 1 department shall report to the standing committees with jurisdiction over education on the
- 2 evaluation conducted under this subsection. The report must also include recommendations on
- 3 whether to continue to authorize governance councils to recommend revitalization models.