

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 197(EDC)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/14/12

Referred: Finance

Sponsor(s): SENATOR THOMAS

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act establishing a grant program in the Department of Education and Early**
2 **Development for achieving excellence in public schools."**

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

4 *** Section 1.** AS 14.17 is amended by adding a new section to read:

5 **Sec. 14.17.485. Achieving excellence grant program.** (a) A grant program is
6 established in the department for the purpose of awarding competitive grants to
7 achieve excellence in public schools that have been designated as low performing
8 under AS 14.03.123. The program is subject to appropriation. Total annual awards
9 may not exceed an amount equal to the number of students who drop out of school in
10 the fiscal year in which the grants are awarded, multiplied by \$400.

11 (b) A school district may apply for a project grant under this section on a form
12 approved by the department. The district shall provide a matching cash amount equal
13 to not less than 10 percent or more than 40 percent of the total project cost from any
14 source of funds available to the district. The department shall annually determine the

1 percentage for the match required for all districts on the basis of the availability of
 2 state funding for the program so that a higher match will result from lower state
 3 funding.

4 (c) The department may not approve a grant application for a proposed grant
 5 project unless the district provides persuasive evidence that the project

6 (1) addresses known causes for designation of a school in the district
 7 as low performing under AS 14.03.123;

8 (2) applies best practices that are research-based;

9 (3) will be sustainable beyond the grant funding period;

10 (4) establishes locally determined and measurable goals for success
 11 that include improvements in student achievement, academic interest, attendance, and
 12 graduation rates;

13 (5) includes a process for providing regular evaluations and reporting
 14 to the department.

15 (d) A grant to a district under (c) of this section may include a grant for a pre-
 16 elementary program. If the department awards a grant under this section for a pre-
 17 elementary program, the program must

18 (1) utilize the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines;

19 (2) demonstrate, based on testing by the department, improvement in
 20 specific child outcomes in all developmental domains;

21 (3) be certified as a pre-elementary school under AS 14.07.020; and

22 (4) prioritize family and community engagement and involvement.

23 (e) The department shall review the progress of a grant project funded under
 24 this section at least once every two years. A project that the department determines is
 25 making sufficient progress toward the short-term and long-term goals established for
 26 the project may, at the discretion of the department, be continued for not more than
 27 two additional years on request of the grantee. Thirty days after notice to the grantee,
 28 the department shall discontinue a project that is failing to make sufficient progress
 29 toward the short-term and long-term goals established for the project.

30 (f) The department may provide grant funding beyond an initial four-year
 31 grant period if the district reapplies and the department determines the project is

1 demonstrating significant success.

2 (g) If appropriations are insufficient to fund all qualified grant projects in a
3 year, the department shall allocate annual appropriations to the program established
4 under this section to qualified grant projects on a pro rata basis.

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

7 **ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE GRANT PROGRAM; FIRST YEAR.** Notwithstanding
8 the maximum amount established for annual grant awards under AS 14.17.485, added by sec.
9 1 of this Act, the maximum cumulative grants awarded by the Department of Education and
10 Early Development for the first year of the program shall be calculated by multiplying the
11 number of students who drop out of school each year, averaged over the 10 years preceding
12 the effective date of this Act, by \$1,800. If insufficient money is appropriated for the first year
13 of the program to meet the number of qualified grant projects, the department shall allocate
14 the awards on a pro rata basis.