

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

February 22, 2012
8:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair
Senator Joe Thomas, Co-Chair
Senator Bettye Davis, Vice Chair
Senator Hollis French
Senator Gary Stevens

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Senator Cathy Giessel

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 170

"An Act requiring vocational education counseling in public schools."

- MOVED SB 170 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 199

"An Act relating to the vocational and technical instruction funding factor for public school funding."

- MOVED SB 199 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 170

SHORT TITLE: VOCATIONAL ED. COUNSELING IN SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) THOMAS

01/20/12	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/20/12	(S)	EDC, FIN
02/10/12	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/10/12	(S)	Scheduled But Not Heard
02/13/12	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/13/12	(S)	Scheduled But Not Heard

02/22/12 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 199

SHORT TITLE: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FUNDING FACTOR

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) MEYER

02/17/12 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS

02/17/12 (S) EDC, L&C

02/22/12 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

MURRAY RICHMOND, Staff
Senator Joe Thomas
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 170 on behalf of the sponsor.

EDRA MORLEDGE
Staff for Senator Kevin Meyer
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 199 on behalf of the sponsor.

CAROL COMEAU, Superintendent
Anchorage School District
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 170 and SB 199.

RICK RIOS, Director
Career and Technology Education
Anchorage School District
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 170 and SB 199.

BARBARA HUFF-TUCKNESS, Director
Governmental and Legislative Affairs
General Teamsters Local 959
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 170 and SB 199.

LES MORSE, Deputy Director
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 170 and SB 199.

CYNTHIA CURRAN, Director
Division of Teaching and Learning Support
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 170 and SB 199.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:02:22 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR KEVIN MEYER called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators French, Stevens, Co-Chair Thomas and Co-Chair Meyer.

SB 170-VOCATIONAL ED. COUNSELING IN SCHOOLS
SB 199-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FUNDING FACTOR

[8:03:05 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEYER announced the consideration of SB 170 and SB 199 and stated that public testimony was open on both bills. Mr. Richmond would introduce SB 170 and Ms. Morledge would introduce SB 199.

MURRAY RICHMOND, staff for Senator Joe Thomas, Alaska State Legislature and co-aide to the Senate Education Standing Committee, said most schools in the state offered some kind of vocational counseling and SB 170 would extend vocational counseling down to middle school for every school in the state.

He said minimum vocational counseling would occur in the seventh, ninth and eleventh grades. He said studies had shown that the seventh grade was an ideal time to introduce counseling when students start making career choices. He said ninth grade was generally the first year of high school and guidance was important to tie needed curriculum with career choices. He said eleventh grade students are preparing to graduate and counseling addressed the final courses required for vocational or post-secondary education.

He said Section 1 in SB 170 addressed duties of the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) and included a paragraph that insures the delivery of Vocational Education Training Counseling (VETC) under AS 14.14.090.

[8:06:35 AM](#)

MR. RICHMOND said Section 2 outlined the duties of a school district and noted that DEED would provide assistance if a district was unable to provide VETC. He said a district that was providing a comprehensive VETC could continue their program.

[8:07:24 AM](#)

SENATOR DAVIS joined the meeting.

MR. RICHMOND said a Columbia University study concluded that minimum VETC intervention was a very effective tool, especially in middle school.

[8:08:29 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS commented that students tend to have an inaccurate idea of what was required academically for particular occupations. He said VETC would have a substantial impact on the ability of students to better understand the occupation they were considering and the course track required.

MR. RICHMOND replied that he agreed. He noted the importance of starting students on the right track and VETC would provide the impetus.

CO-CHAIR MEYER commented that he participated in the recent Mayor's Education Summit in Anchorage. He noted Samuel E. Abrams' presentation on Finland's education system. He said Finnish students made their career choices by ninth grade and their graduation rate was nearly 100 percent. He expressed appreciation that Senator Thomas brought SB 170 forward.

[8:11:50 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEYER asked Ms. Morledge to introduce SB 199.

[8:12:02 AM](#)

EDRA MORLEDGE, staff to Senator Kevin Meyer, Alaska State Legislature, and co-aide to the Senate Education Standing Committee, said SB 199 would open up the vocational education funding factor that was built into the Base Student Allocation (BSA) with SB 84. She said a 1.01 percent vocational education funding factor was included into the foundation formula for vocational educational programs for students in ninth through twelfth grade. She said many school districts had expressed a desire to expand the VETC program to middle school students.

She said research indicated that middle school was the optimal age to introduce career and technical education programs. She said VETC would help to engage students at an earlier age and

capture more students who were losing interest in their education by high school. She said districts would have more flexibility in how they develop and deliver programs by including seventh and eighth grades.

She said SB 199 would simply change the name of the high school vocational and technical instruction funding factor to secondary school vocational and technical and technical instruction funding factor. She said the name change was the key language that would open it up to the seventh and eighth grades as Alaska statues defined secondary schools as seventh through twelfth grades. She said SB 199 would replace the language that allowed the use of the funding from students enrolled in ninth through twelfth grades to students enrolled in a secondary school.

[8:14:03 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS highlighted that SB 170 and SB 199 had zero fiscal notes.

CO-CHAIR MEYER inquired why SB 170 received a Finance Committee referral and SB 199 received a Labor and Commerce Committee referral.

SENATOR DAVIS commented that she liked the changes made in SB 199.

[8:15:25 AM](#)

CAROL COMEAU, Superintendent, Anchorage School District, said SB 199 would provide more flexibility for middle school students. She said the Anchorage School District (ASD) had tremendous success the last couple of years with middle school career guides. She noted that prior testimony on VETC at earlier ages was correct. She said VETC provided earlier discussions with students regarding long term thinking about careers and courses required to achieve their goals.

CO-CHAIR MEYER asked if there was increased demand for VETC from parents and students.

MS. COMEAU answered yes. She said VETC had become a major priority with ASD's school board as they addressed dropout rates, graduation rates and how to better engage students to keep them interested in school. She noted that Samuel E. Abrams from the Mayor's Education Summit visited a number of ASD schools and was intrigued with the added Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in addition to the initiation of career pathways in middle school. She said ASD's comprehensive VETC has

led to enthusiastic students and noted that VETC advisory committees had been beneficial to its success.

8:18:54 AM

RICK RIOS, Director, Career and Technology Education, Anchorage School District, noted that President Obama's recent State of the Union Address emphasized education, technical skills and jobs. He said that last year the Alaska State Legislature supported career and technical education by passing SB 84. He said the investment made by the state did not reach all of the students who desperately need career information and SB 199 would allow that to happen.

8:21:50 AM

CO-CHAIR THOMAS asked if there was a plan to track of the successes.

MR. RIOS answered no.

8:23:47 AM

CO-CHAIR MEYER asked how prepared rural districts were to take on VETC.

MR. RIOS answered that he could not answer for the rural school districts. He said he communicated with rural schools as a CTE cohort coordinator and noted they had to deal with added issues regarding fuel and staffing. He said the state's CTE plan was a good plan and following in whatever capacity would make it possible for rural school districts to be more successful than administrating independent procedures.

CO-CHAIR MEYER commented that his goal was to not lose students who may drop out of school due to a lack of interest in their current career options. He said he wanted to make sure that all kids would have an opportunity for VETC.

MR. RIOS responded that a district would have to address local economics and opportunities to keep people at home prior to developing a CTE plan.

8:26:56 AM

BARBARA HUFF TUCKNESS, Director, Governmental and Legislative Affairs, General Teamsters Local 959, Anchorage, said students would be more successful with additional educational tools. She noted that more high school graduates required remedial mathematics education when attending vocational school and having students focus earlier on their careers was beneficial.

8:30:40 AM

CO-CHAIR MEYER asked if her son knew he had an interest in vocational education by middle school.

MS. HUFF TUCKNESS answered that her son did not have vocational and technical opportunities in high school.

CO-CHAIR MEYER asked if there was an educational void prior to vocational and technical training.

MS. HUFF TUCKNESS answered yes. She said assuring that students graduated from high school with basic education tool sets was important.

8:33:55 AM

LES MORSE, Deputy Director, Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, said SB 199 expressed the intent of the legislature to provide some expansion of how the vocational and technical education funding was intended to be spent. He said funding was spent discretionarily, but districts were trying to be true to the intent of the legislature. He said DEED has no problem with SB 199 and believed it was good legislation that would support schools.

8:35:20 AM

CYNTHIA CURRAN, Director, Division of Teaching and Learning Support, Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, said Mr. Rios referred to the CTE plan that insured every student received a personal learning and career plan. She said SB 170 would help to move the CTE strategy down to middle school students. She said the Department of Labor and Workforce Development in addition to the State Library System offered a number of free career development resources to all Alaskans.

8:37:39 AM

CO-CHAIR MEYER closed public testimony on SB 170 and SB 199. Finding no further questions or committee discussion, he solicited separate motions to move the bills.

8:38:13 AM

CO-CHAIR THOMAS moved to report SB 170 from the committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note(s).

CO-CHAIR MEYER announced that without objection, SB 170 moved from the Senate Education Committee.

[8:38:29 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS moved to report SB 199 from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note(s).

[8:38:39 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR THOMAS announced that without objection, SB 199 moved from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

CO-CHAIR MEYER noted that SB 170 and SB 199 may merge at some point.

[8:40:50 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEYER introduced a visiting group of students from rural Alaska.

[8:43:30 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Co-Chair Meyer adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 8:43 a.m.