

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 64(EDC)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/10/17

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES DRUMMOND, Gara, Talerico, Spohnholz, Birch, Tarr, Josephson

SENATORS Costello, Begich, Wielechowski, Gardner, Stevens, MacKinnon, Shower, Giessel, Stedman, Bishop, von Imhof, Meyer, Wilson, Hughes, Micciche

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to the establishment of the Task Force on Reading Proficiency and**
2 **Reading Instruction for All Students and on the Effects of Dyslexia on Some Students."**

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

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

6 LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

7 (1) approximately 47,000 students in the state do not meet Alaska English
8 Language Arts standards as indicated by the Alaska Measures of Progress test, and reading
9 proficiency scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress for students in the
10 state were stagnant from 2003 through 2015;

11 (2) the results on student assessments demonstrate that the state can improve
12 reading instruction for students;

13 (3) dyslexia, the most common specific learning disability, affects between
14 three and 17 percent of the student population and accounts for approximately 80 percent of

1 all specific learning disabilities;

2 (4) the scientific consensus is that, when learning to read, typical and atypical
3 learners have overlapping instructional needs, including the need for highly knowledgeable
4 and skilled reading teachers to improve reading proficiency outcomes; and

5 (5) the residents of this state hold the legislature, the governor, and the state
6 Board of Education and Early Development accountable for student reading proficiency
7 outcomes because the legislature, the governor, and the state Board of Education and Early
8 Development are responsible for developing and implementing strongly justified education
9 budget proposals and for leading reforms of the state's public education system.

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

12 TASK FORCE ON READING PROFICIENCY AND READING INSTRUCTION
13 FOR ALL STUDENTS AND ON THE EFFECTS OF DYSLEXIA ON SOME STUDENTS.

14 (a) The Task Force on Reading Proficiency and Reading Instruction for All Students and on
15 the Effects of Dyslexia on Some Students is established as a joint task force of the Alaska
16 State Legislature. The purpose of the task force is to

17 (1) evaluate and make recommendations regarding reading instructional
18 practices for all public school students in the state and the diagnosis, treatment, and education
19 of children affected by dyslexia; and

20 (2) examine how current statutes and regulations affect reading proficiency
21 outcomes.

22 (b) The task force established under (a) of this section shall

23 (1) examine

24 (A) the effects of dyslexia on reading proficiency outcomes in the state
25 and in other jurisdictions;

26 (B) dyslexia education practices and laws in other jurisdictions;

27 (C) educational reforms related to reading that have been implemented
28 in the state and the reasons for the success or failure of those reforms at the local level;

29 (2) evaluate and recommend

30 (A) methods to improve reading proficiency and reading instruction
31 for all public school students in the state;

1 (B) legislative changes and measures to improve reading proficiency
2 outcomes;

3 (C) methods to mitigate the effects of dyslexia on reading proficiency,
4 including

5 (i) early screening, early identification, and early intervention
6 for students in preschool through grade three;

7 (ii) screening, identification, and intervention for students in
8 grades four through 12;

9 (iii) training all relevant educational staff in the use of
10 evidence-based screening and identification instruments; and

11 (3) identify evidence-based, multi-sensory, direct, explicit, structured, and
12 sequential approaches to instructing students affected by dyslexia.

13 (c) The task force shall complete interim and final reports summarizing the findings
14 and recommendations of the task force, including proposed legislation for the Alaska State
15 Legislature to consider. The task force shall submit to the governor, the state Board of
16 Education and Early Development, and the senate secretary and chief clerk of the house of
17 representatives an interim report not later than January 31, 2018, and a final report not later
18 than January 31, 2019, and notify the legislature that each report is available.

19 (d) The task force consists of 15 members as follows:

20 (1) three members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of
21 the house of representatives, including at least one member of the minority organizational
22 caucus;

23 (2) three members of the senate appointed by the president of the senate,
24 including at least one member of the minority organizational caucus;

25 (3) the commissioner of education and early development, or the
26 commissioner's designee, who serves as a nonvoting member; and

27 (4) eight members of the public to be appointed jointly by the speaker of the
28 house of representatives and the president of the senate as follows:

29 (A) one member who is an active or retired teacher in kindergarten
30 through grade three with significant experience teaching reading to students
31 developing typically and atypically in the state;

1 (B) one member representing either the Alaska Council of School
2 Administrators or the Association of Alaska School Boards who is knowledgeable
3 about reading instruction and dyslexia;

4 (C) one member representing the Alaska Association of Elementary
5 School Principals who is knowledgeable about reading instruction and dyslexia;

6 (D) one member representing the University of Alaska who, for both
7 typically and atypically developing students, is a highly knowledgeable and skilled
8 teacher of reading and demonstrates the ability to pass this knowledge and skill on to
9 student teachers, or if a candidate meeting the criteria in this subparagraph is not
10 available, one member who is a nationally recognized expert in teaching reading to
11 both typically and atypically developing students who demonstrates the ability to pass
12 this knowledge and skill on to student teachers; and

13 (E) four members representing nonprofit organizations that are focused
14 on issues related to reading and education, including one member who is a parent of a
15 child with a reading disability.

16 (e) The members of the task force shall select a chair from the voting members of the
17 task force. The task force meets at the call of the chair and shall meet at least six but not more
18 than 10 times annually. A majority of the members of the task force constitutes a quorum.

19 (f) A vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original
20 selection or appointment. If a member has a conflict of interest with respect to a matter before
21 the task force, the member may not take action on that matter. The remaining members of the
22 task force shall consult with an expert regarding the matter before the task force.

23 (g) The task force may request data and other information from the Department of
24 Education and Early Development, school districts, and other state agencies.

25 (h) The staff of the legislative members of the task force shall provide administrative
26 and other support to the task force.

27 (i) Public members of the task force serve without compensation. The task force shall
28 meet telephonically. Members of the task force are not entitled to per diem or travel expenses.

29 (j) The task force expires on January 31, 2019.

30 (k) In this section,

31 (1) "dyslexia" means a learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and

1 is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling
2 and decoding abilities;

3 (2) "relevant educational staff" includes school psychologists, special
4 education teachers, other teachers, principals, and superintendents; and

5 (3) "task force" means the Task Force on Reading Proficiency and Reading
6 Instruction for All Students and on the Effects of Dyslexia on Some Students.