

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
April 19, 2018  
1:35 p.m.

1:35:03 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Foster called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair  
Representative Paul Seaton, Co-Chair  
Representative Les Gara, Vice-Chair  
Representative Jason Grenn  
Representative David Guttenberg  
Representative Scott Kawasaki  
Representative Dan Ortiz  
Representative Lance Pruitt  
Representative Steve Thompson  
Representative Cathy Tilton  
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Senator David Wilson, Sponsor; Representative Ivy Spohnholz; Brittany Hartman, Staff, Co-Chair MacKinnon; Paul Prussing, Director, Student Learning, Department of Education and Early Development; Marcy Herman, Special Assistant, Department of Education and Early Development.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Margaret Brodie, Director, Division of Health Care Services, Department of Health and Social Services

SUMMARY

CSSB 104 (2d FIN)  
EDUCATION CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

CSSB 104(2d FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

CSSB 105(FIN)

MARITAL/FAMILY THERAPY LIC & MED SERVICES

HCS CSSB 105 (FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with two previously published fiscal impact notes: FN3 (CED) and FN4 (DHS).

Co-Chair Foster reviewed the agenda for the day.

#sb105

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 105(FIN)

"An Act relating to the licensure of marital and family therapists; relating to medical assistance for marital and family therapy services; and providing for an effective date."

[1:35:47 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster indicated that bill had been heard the prior day, April 18, 2018.

[1:36:20 PM](#)

SENATOR DAVID WILSON, SPONSOR, he did not have any comments but was available for questions.

[1:37:04 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara referenced Page 3 of the legislation, which said that Marital and Family Therapy Services would be covered. He asked whether that included marriage counseling. He stated that the covered items in the bill were limited to what was covered under Medicaid and the things covered by Medicaid were mental health related. He contended that the bill would not expand services to include traditional, non-mental health related marital counseling.

Co-Chair Foster recognized Representative Pruitt at the table.

[1:38:14 PM](#)

Co-Chair Seaton MOVED to ADOPT Amendment 1 (copy on file):

Page 4, following line 8:

Insert a new bill section to read:

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

REPORT TO LEGISLATURE. (a) The Department of Health and Social Services shall prepare a report that describes the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the coverage of marital and family therapy services as provided in AS 47.07.030(b). as amended by sec. 3 of this Act. The report must include the distribution of services provided by billing code and the diversion from more expensive alternatives.

(b) On or before November 30, 2020, the Department of Health and Social Services shall deliver the report under (a) of this section to the senate secretary and the chief clerk of the house of representatives and notify the legislature that the report is available."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 4, line 10:

Delete "sec. 511

Insert "sec. 6"

Representative Wilson OBJECTED.

Co-Chair Seaton asked whether the department could comment on the date of November 30, 2020.

[1:38:44 PM](#)

MARGARET BRODIE, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (via teleconference), indicated that November 30th an acceptable date.

[1:39:29 PM](#)

Co-Chair Seaton asked whether the year should be 2021, rather than 2020.

Ms. Brodie indicated the 2020 report would be preliminary data but would not be a good foundation on which to base

any decisions. A comprehensive report could be completed by 2021 and would include all the information necessary for sound decision making.

[1:40:25 PM](#)

Co-Chair Seaton MOVED to ADOPT Conceptual Amendment 1:

Line 10:

Change the date to 2021 rather than 2020.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

Co-Chair Foster asked whether the sponsor of the House companion bill wished to comment.

[1:41:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE IVY SPOHNHOLZ, supported the conceptual amendment.

Representative Wilson WITHDREW her OBJECTION.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

[1:42:02 PM](#)

Representative Wilson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment 2 (copy on file).

Representative Gara OBJECTED.

Representative Wilson explained that the amendment addressed the concern that once something had been added to Medicaid it could not be removed. She said that she wanted the report to have meaningful impact and a sunset date would force the legislature to regularly audit programs.

Co-Chair Foster invited the bill sponsor to comment on the amendment.

Senator Wilson respectfully opposed the amendment. He felt that if the amendment were to pass, he would want to see an effective date change so that providers could meet requirements. He worried that the amendment would negatively affect family therapists.

[1:45:14 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara asked how difficult it was to become a certified Medicaid biller.

Ms. Brodie explained that the first thing a medical provider had to do was to enroll in the program, which included at \$500, out of pocket, fee. She furthered that providers then had to provide proof of their business and occupational licenses. A recent issue was that the providers had to provide full ownership and disclosure information; including all the social security numbers of their owners and board members. Individuals that worked for Medicaid had to have background checks. Additionally, individuals would need to be certified by the Division of Behavioral Health and would have to have proof of insurance and an MPI number. Some providers had to have first aid and CPR certification. Providers also had to provide proof of liability insurance and sign a Medicaid providers agreement. Some providers could be required to perform a pre-enrollment site visit. She said that the state would put the provider into one of three categories: low risk, medium risk, or high risk; she believed that these providers would fall into the medium risk category and would be on a 5-year revalidation schedule. She clarified that all those requirements were just to sign up. Billing was another story; electronic billing would require new software and the building of interfaces for the Enterprise system. She stressed that electronic billing significantly ramped up the security and auditing requirements required for computer systems. Annual billing by paper would be available but would add to payment delays.

[1:48:39 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara asked whether training was required to be able to do Medicaid billing.

Ms. Brodie responded that there was ongoing training required; regularly changing codes required continual training. She said that additional administrative staff could be needed. She shared that there were over 10,000 denial messages that a provider could get and that providers would need to review the list each time in order to understand the nature of a denial.

[1:49:59 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara thought the legislature had to make a choice of whether to include the listed programs. He was also uncertain whether therapists would want to go through all the hoops again with a sunset date in place. He warned that a sunsetted bill was not easy to reenact; the bill would disappear, and the legislature would have to go through the entire process again.

Representative Wilson clarified that the sunset date only applied to the Medicaid a portion of the bill.

[1:51:31 PM](#)

Representative Ortiz asked about the upfront fee to providers for enrollment. He asked whether the fee was annual and who received the fee.

Ms. Brodie indicated that the fee was not an annual charge but did have to be paid again during the revalidation process. She said that the fee offset the cost of enrollment with the state and the federal government because it had become onerous for all entities involved.

Representative Ortiz asked who received the fees.

Ms. Brodie responded that the money was paid to the state then the state paid 50 percent back to the federal government.

Representative Wilson asked how many years it would take to find out whether the additional services had none what was expected.

Ms. Brodie thought that it would take a minimum of 3 years. She believed more enrollment would be seen after 24 months.

Representative Wilson asked whether 2024 would be a better sunset date.

Ms. Brodie responded that the department would have the full documentation and data analytics by 2024.

[1:54:21 PM](#)

Representative Wilson MOVED to ADOPT Conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment 2. The amendment would change the date on Line 9, from 2021 to 2024.

There being NO OBJECTION, Conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment 2 was ADOPTED.

[1:55:20 PM](#)

Representative Tilton asked about Medicaid billing courses that were already available.

Ms. Brodie responded that there were individuals who trained in medical coding, the only individuals that trained in Medicaid coding were the division and Conduent.

[1:56:08 PM](#)

Co-Chair Seaton referred to Amendment 1. He wondered whether the date should be changed to November 30th in Amendment 2.

Ms. Brodie responded that notice to stop a benefit was usually given to all providers and recipients ahead of time, typically July 1st or January 1st. She said that other dates could be considered but were not typical of the Medicaid program.

[1:57:08 PM](#)

Representative Wilson did not want to kill a program, but rather to force the legislature to look at it periodically. She worried that unsuccessful programs would be added that did not produce the intended results. She noted that the program was costly and believed that it should be audited at least once before renewal.

Vice-Chair Gara MAINTAINED his OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Tilton, Wilson, Ortiz, Pruitt, Thompson,  
OPPOSED: Gara, Grenn, Guttenberg, Kawasaki, Seaton,  
Foster

The MOTION FAILED (5/6).

[2:00:06 PM](#)

AT EASE

[2:00:39 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Vice-Chair Gara reviewed the previously published fiscal notes:

FN3 - Fiscal Impact Note

Department: Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development

Appropriation: Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

Allocation: Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

OMB Component Number: 2360

FN4 - Fiscal Impact Note

Department: Department of Health and Social Services

Appropriation: Medicaid Services

Allocation: Behavioral Health Medicaid Services

OMB Component Number: 2660

[2:02:19 PM](#)

Co-Chair Seaton MOVED to report HCSCSSB 105 (FIN) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

Representative Wilson OBJECTED.

Representative Wilson reiterated her concern about the addition of a possibly unsuccessful program to the Medicaid program.

Co-Chair Seaton shared that he supported a sunset date for the program.

[2:05:40 PM](#)

Representative Pruitt lamented that the state did not have a fiscal plan, but it was adding services to Medicaid. He expressed concern for adding to long-term costs.

[2:07:15 PM](#)

Representative Guttenberg commented that the bill represented the ability to deliver services to keep people

out of higher cost situations. He thought it was cost avoidance and was part of a plan to deal with healthcare in the state.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Gara, Grenn, Guttenberg, Kawasaki, Ortiz, Foster, Seaton

OPPOSED: Wilson, Pruitt, Thompson, Tilton

The MOTION PASSED (7/4).

HCS CSSB 105 (FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with two previously published fiscal impact notes: FN3 (CED) and FN4 (DHS).

[2:09:29 PM](#)

AT EASE

[2:10:50 PM](#)

RECONVENED

#SB104

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 104 (2d FIN)

"An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to the duties of the state Board of Education and Early Development; relating to school curricula; and relating to a system for managing student information and records related to individualized education programs for children with disabilities."

[2:10:57 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster relayed that the conversation was a continuation of the previous day's meeting. He stated that he would likely set the bill aside. He asked Ms. Hartmann to the table.

[2:11:41 PM](#)

BRITTANY HARTMAN, STAFF, CO-CHAIR MACKINNON, reviewed the sectional analysis:

Section 1 AS 14.07.030:

The Department may not require a school district to review their curriculum more than once in a 10-year period.

Section 2 AS 14.07.165:

The State Board of Education shall review the math and English Language Arts curricula used throughout the state, every 5 years, to ensure the curricula is still effective and is using best practices.

Section 3 AS 14.07:

Section 3 requires the State Board of Education and the Department of Education and Early Development to work together to find, review, and test the best available curricula and the best practices for instruction of those math and English/Language Arts curricula. The department may provide incentive payments to school districts that choose to implement the incentivized curricula and best practices. Specifically:

(a) The Board will establish the standards and procedure to review, rank, and approve curricula for school districts to use in each grade level.

(b) and (c): The Department will review curricula from Alaska, other states, and other countries and identify the best curricula for each grade level and the best practices for teaching each subject by July 1, 2019. If the identified curricula and best practices meets certain requirements, the department will submit them for review by the board. The requirements are: appropriate, compliance with nondiscrimination standards in state law, aligned with state standards, and result in improved academic achievement.

(d) The Board may approve of the curricula submitted by the department. If they do so, the Department will then categorize the two curricula as "incentivized" curricula and "designated effective" curricula. The incentivized curricula will be the best available and will be the curricula used in the pilot program. The designated effective curricula are curricula that the department finds appropriate and effective.

(e) Establishes the three-year pilot program, starting in the 2019-2020 school year, to test

the appropriateness and effectiveness of the "incentivized" curricula. Schools can apply to be in the pilot program and will be reviewed and approved of by the Department based on capacity and readiness. The Department shall select five schools, from those that apply, to receive incentive payments to assist with the purchase and implementation of the curricula and best practices. The Department must select districts and their curricula as follows, in order to get a comprehensive view of the best curriculum for all Alaska:

- a. Urban District - math
- b. Rural District - math
- c. Urban District - English Language Arts
- d. Rural District - English Language Arts
- e. Urban or Rural District - math or English Language Arts

The total cost of the three-year pilot program cannot exceed \$10,000,000.

(f) If the pilot program shows that adoption of the incentive curricula is appropriate and effective, the department may make available to all districts the curricula and one-time incentive payments starting in the school year beginning in 2022 and ending in the school year that begins in 2024.

(g) Incentive payments are limited to a school district's ADM multiplied by 150 and are subject to availability of funding in (h). In order to get an incentive payment, a district must be ready and have the capacity to implement the incentivized curricula and have not previously used the curricula.

(h) Limits the funding available to school districts that adopt the incentivized curriculum, for years 4-6, to \$20,000,000, plus any unexpended money available under (e)(4).

(i) The Department shall publish all curriculum used by all school districts, on the Department's website. The incentivized curricula and the designated effective curricula, identified by the Board, will also be published on the website.

(j) The Department shall submit an electronic report to the legislature providing information on the pilot program and the curricula that each school district adopts.

(k) Requires school districts to submit the relevant information to the department that is needed for the department to carry out its duties under this section.

(l) All payments for the pilot program and curricula are subject to appropriation. If insufficient funding is available to distribute payments to all school districts that request funding in a year, the department may distribute payments to the remaining school districts the following school year.

(m) If the applications for participation in the pilot program are insufficient to meet the requirements under (e) of this section, the department may select five school districts from those that apply, taking into consideration geographical diversity.

(n) Provides for the continuation of incentive payments after the pilot program ends. Incentive payments may go to school districts that use curricula reviewed and approved by the Board under AS 14.07.165(c).

(o) Defines "rural," "school district," "school district's ADM" and "urban"

AS 14.08.182

Establishes the curriculum improvement and best practices fund, which consists of an initial \$30,000,000 to fund the first six years of the curricula incentive program. The funds can be spent without further appropriation and do not lapse.

Section 4 AS 14.08.111:

Conforming language requiring a regional school board to review all textbooks and instructional materials at least once every 10 years.

Section 5 AS 14.14.090:

Conforming language requiring a school board to review all textbooks and instructional materials at least once every 10 years.

Section 6 AS 14.16.020:

Conforming language requiring management of state boarding schools to review all textbooks and instructional materials at least once every 10 years.

Section 7 AS 14.30.285:

The department shall make available to school districts an electronic system for managing student information and tracking records relating to individualized education programs for children with disabilities.

Section 8 Repeals:

Repeals sub-sections (e), (f), (g), (h), (j), (l), and (m) in AS 14.07.180 that pertain to the pilot program, its incentive payments, and its reporting requirements.

Sec. 9 4 AAC 05.080(e):

Annuls the regulatory requirement of a local school board having to evaluate their curriculum every 6 years.

[2:17:55 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster OPENED and CLOSED public testimony.

Representative Kawasaki mentioned that the bill talked about the Math and Language Arts curricula. He wondered about other curricula offered in schools.

Ms. Hartmann replied that the intent of the legislation was to provide the best core of reading, writing, and arithmetic; once the core had been found to improve student outcomes, the bill would allow for science history, and physical education to be reviewed.

Representative Kawasaki asked why the state would want to have the core written into statute, rather than regulation.

Ms. Hartmann explained that the only regulatory issue that would be moved was curriculum review, which was an expensive and arduous task for districts.

[2:20:19 PM](#)

Representative Wilson thought that the review was a fine idea. She wondered whether how it would be determined which student years would be under review.

Ms. Hartmann responded that bill currently applied to curriculum review for K-12.

Representative Wilson commented that review of K-12 for just the Anchorage School District would cost \$5 million. She wondered about the \$10 million cost expected in the first year.

Ms. Hartmann relayed that the reason that the first year showed a cost of \$10 million was because two larger school districts were included. She did not believe that it would be possible to do the review in Fairbanks and Anchorage, along with two others, which could require smaller schools to be put in the pilot program.

Representative Wilson understood that the bill would need to be changed in order meet costs for review of K-12 curriculum for all the listed schools involved in the pilot year.

[2:22:43 PM](#)

Representative Grenn referred to Section 3 (i) of the bill:

(i) The Department shall publish all curriculum used by all school districts, on the Department's website. The incentivized curricula and the designated effective curricula, identified by the Board, will also be published on the website.

Representative Grenn asked for further clarification of the subsection.

Ms. Hartmann responded that the idea to insert the section came from the commissioner of education with the goal of having a "publisher's clearing house" of sorts on the Department of Education and Early Development website where every school district would publish all their curriculum, for each subject, K-12. She furthered that this would offer more transparency of the curriculum being delivered.

Representative Grenn asked if the information would be available to other school districts.

Ms. Hartmann understood that all curriculum would be online for all schools to peruse.

[2:24:24 PM](#)

Representative Grenn suggested that a school district outside of the pilot program would have access to the information and could integrate desirable curriculum into their system.

Ms. Hartmann replied in the affirmative.

[2:25:05 PM](#)

Representative Tilton referred to the duties of the regional school board in Sections 4 and 5. She asked how the sections affected homeschool families.

Ms. Hartmann responded that the sections did not apply to homeschoolers in any way.

[2:26:04 PM](#)

Representative Ortiz referred to the beginning of Section 3:

Section 3 requires the State Board of Education and the Department of Education and Early Development to work together to find, review, and test the best available curricula and the best practices for instruction of those math and English/Language Arts curricula.

Representative Ortiz thought that "best available curricula and the best practices for instruction" was a lofty goal. He understood that the department and the state board would determine what was the "best".

[2:27:50 PM](#)

Ms. Hartmann responded that the department, and the state board, in consultation with teachers and other stakeholders from around the state, would determine what curriculum was best.

Representative Ortiz commented that curriculum that worked in one are of the state might not work as well in another area.

Ms. Hartman clarified that in order to determine what worked best in both urban and rural Alaska, different curricula had to be investigated for each that incorporated

Math and English while recognizing the individual needs of the areas.

Representative Guttenberg asked about a digital divide between school districts; some schools could not function online. She asked whether the curriculum review would address the bandwidth disparity in the state.

Ms. Hartmann replied that the goal was to help provide the best curriculum and teaching practices to teachers and students by paying for textbooks, training, and professional materials. She said that there was no technology piece to the legislature.

Representative Guttenberg noted that there were many educational programs and curriculum available online. He felt that the digital divide in the state needed to be addressed.

[2:30:38 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara thought the goal was to achieve better curriculum for students. The department would search for the curriculum and make it available to districts. He assumed there would be a couple of positions that would be needed for the pilot program.

Ms. Hartmann responded that the fiscal note reflected 3 new, full-time positions in the department. She said that the goal was to have improved educational student outcomes; the pilot program would consist of 5 school districts but every student in every school district would have access to the curriculum.

[2:32:19 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara surmised that better curriculum would be found through help of the department and grant money would be used to help qualifying school districts to purchase the curriculum. He wondered whether the grant program would be available for curriculum found by another school district.

Ms. Hartmann responded that the department was charged to find the best curriculum in the state, the nation, and the world. Once the best curriculum had been identified it would become what the incentivized payments could be used for.

Vice-Chair Gara understood that the department would make a list of the approved curriculum.

Ms. Hartmann responded that all the best curricula found would be posted online but only one would be eligible for incentive payments.

Vice-Chair Gara thought that the teaching practices would be fitting to whichever curricula was chosen. He wondered whether the district should be able to use the funds for purchasing material that would help their instructors with teaching practices unrelated to the new curriculum. He understood that the teaching practices in the bill would be related to the chosen curriculum.

Ms. Hartmann replied that was correct.

[2:35:11 PM](#)

Co-Chair Seaton referred to proposed review of curricula every 5 years. He wondered why the two most static areas of curricula would be reviewed so frequently.

Ms. Hartmann answered that to make sure the found curricula was still the best it would need to be reviewed, at the board level, every 5 years.

Co-Chair Seaton was not sure how the reviews could be conducted for the entire state so frequently. He noted that rural districts varied wildly across the state. He questioned whether it was going to be a comprehensive determination if only one district did Math review and one did English.

Ms. Hartmann replied that the sponsor had been told that five school districts, 2 urban and 2 rural, was a good sampling. She said that it could always be expanded or decreased.

Co-Chair Seaton felt that the concept assumed that education was occurring in silos.

Ms. Hartmann replied that the intent was not to direct anyone into silos. The intent was to let districts do what they deem best. She said that many studies had shown that curriculum was one of the best levers to pull to improve student achievement.

2:41:06 PM

Co-Chair Seaton guessed they were providing incentive to implement a textbook based, single subject curriculum. He did not know if there was any model to see if the other more participatory models were being incentivized. He thought the issue should be considered. He spoke about the goal of advancement and achievement for school districts. He did not know whether a single focus curriculum would get the school districts to the intended place.

Ms. Hartmann appreciated the comments. She stated that there were many hurdles facing the education system. The bill was a step in improving the system.

Representative Pruitt asked whether the goal was to find one set of curricula to incentivize; and if so, would that be per district or for the entire state.

Ms. Hartmann replied that the incentivized curricula would be two in two forms, one that worked for urban areas and one that worked for rural areas.

Representative Thompson thought the bill sounded good; however, he stated that many school districts were already doing this work. He felt that the department was looking all the time at better curriculum. He expressed discomfort with the addition of three positions to the department during the state's current fiscal climate.

2:46:27 PM

Representative Wilson whether the state had a testing mechanism for the state's schools.

PAUL PRUSSING, DIRECTOR, STUDENT LEARNING, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, replied that as of recent over 90 percent of the students in the state had taken a Language Arts exam, 88 percent took a Math exam, and 82 percent had completed a Science exam.

Representative Wilson asked how difficult it was to utilize the test results for determining which curricula was delivering expected results.

Mr. Prussing responded that the hope was that Every Student Succeeds (ESSA) application would be approved. He said that the application contained an accountability system and growth model. The more standardized test information that was available to show growth would be beneficial, from that information it could also be seen which schools were producing the best results. He added that professional development funds could be leveraged to create efficiencies when best practices were shared between districts. He stated that the search for a good curriculum could be time consuming for superintendents and sometimes many curricula would be identified as "best," which was why it was important that districts be able to share data.

[2:50:10 PM](#)

Representative Wilson asked about districts that were continually in decline.

Mr. Prussing replied that there were two processes - a state coaching process and under the new ESSA plan districts could receive assistance in analyze data to determine where the deficiencies stemmed from, like high teacher turnover. He said that teacher turnover rate could not be controlled; however, districts could control the professional development around a well-defined curriculum.

Representative Wilson supported Mr. Prussing's final remark. She questioned why the bill extended from K through 12, rather than K-5 or K-8.

Ms. Hartmann believed the goal was to improve all grade levels. She shared that the state had a 52 percent remediation rate of freshman entering university from Alaska's high schools.

[2:54:38 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara remarked that the state was facing two problems. The department had been consistent and had supported the effort to retain teachers. He probed whether the legislation was the best choice financially for the state.

MARCY HERMAN, SPECIAL ASSISTANT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, noted that the commissioner had testified in support of the bill the previous day. She said

that the department had worked with the sponsor for over a year on the legislation. She shared that significant improvements in grade level reading had been witnessed within the 3-year pilot program of Reading First. She stressed that curricula could make a significant difference in education outcomes.

Mr. Prussing added that the commissioner had read the research from other states. He said that one of the biggest policy drivers for education was clear curriculum adoption.

[2:57:53 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Gara thought the testimony made sense. He noted that they were not going to get better student success by cutting teachers and school days. He asked what the department had been doing in terms of finding curriculum to date.

[2:59:03 PM](#)

Mr. Prussing replied that putting the curriculum on the web site would allow for other districts and the public to see what was being used. He said that currently, local boards adopted curriculum and text books. He said that in the past the department had worked to help districts align their curriculum to state standards.

Vice-Chair Gara understood that schools were struggling with funding. He felt that the three additional positions were crucial to the bill.

Mr. Prussing agreed the positions were critical to the department. He said that the positions would continue to keep a current list of what was working in the state, in the country, and in the world.

Ms. Hartmann added that the bill benefitted every school district; the first three years would be a test to be sure that the program was appropriate and effective, the following three years would provide fund for every school that wanted to participate.

[3:02:15 PM](#)

Representative Guttenberg wanted to talk about Math class. He talked about grouping children together so that students

with stronger aptitude could be coupled with those that needed additional help. He wondered how much teaching style played a role in the success of curriculum.

Mr. Prussing replied that using a curriculum of adoption allowed teachers to modify teaching strategies for their individual students. He believed that a dialogue between teachers about what was working was necessary.

[3:05:55 PM](#)

Representative Guttenberg understood that some curriculums were proprietary, and many computer programs were proprietary. He wondered about how existing and new curricula would merge.

Mr. Prussing replied that the program was voluntary, and districts could choose not to participate. He said that if a district had already invested in a program they could choose not to participate. He felt that the bill created a dialogue amongst educators about what worked and what did not.

[3:08:11 PM](#)

Representative Ortiz stated that the issue of curriculum in schools had always existed. He spoke about whether the bill would be the best way to spend \$30 million for education. He thought teachers were always the factor that made classrooms a success. He wanted to incentivize teachers. He stated that in the end the curriculum was not more important than teachers.

Mr. Prussing replied that good curriculum could attract better teachers. He lamented that it was a challenge to get curriculum that was consistent for longer periods of time.

Representative Ortiz agreed it was not an easy task to find a ubiquitous curriculum that fit every classroom. He contended that a good teacher could take a lousy curriculum and still produce results, rather than having a great curriculum and a weak teacher.

[3:12:16 PM](#)

Co-Chair Seaton stated that there were blue ribbon schools and information about the curricula of those schools could

be used to determine which curriculum was working most effectively.

Mr. Prussing believed it was the important aspect of the three positions in the bill. The state had not had the ability to look at its own data thoroughly. He stressed that the department had lost 25 staff. He agreed there were numerous variables. He stressed the importance that districts be aware of what was going on in schools and what was working. He said that a good principal, long term staff, and a well-defined curriculum were all necessary for successful schools.

[3:15:31 PM](#)

Co-Chair Seaton spoke of the blue-ribbon school at Anchor Point. He felt that that school could be looked to for a successful curriculum. He recognized that there were varying factors that contributed to successful schools. He thought that high achieving schools across the state should be investigated for success practices. He expressed concern for curriculum as silos for development.

[3:17:54 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster set an amendment deadline of 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 20, 2018.

CSSB 104(2d FIN) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Representative Wilson asked about amendments to HB 411.

[3:18:29 PM](#)

AT EASE

[3:18:45 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Foster replied the committee was holding HB 411 at present.

Representative Wilson noted that industry was watching to see what the legislature was doing. She hoped that delaying hearing of the bill would not result in a loss of investment in the state.

Vice-Chair Gara noted there had been an announcement in the paper that day about a new oil discovery. He was not concerned about a delay of a couple of days.

Representative Wilson encouraged hearing the bill sooner rather than later.

Co-Chair Foster provided the schedule for the following day. [The meeting was recessed to a call of the chair but never reconvened.]

#

ADJOURNMENT

[3:20:57 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.