

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 8, 2019

8:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Harriet Drummond, Co-Chair
Representative Andi Story, Co-Chair
Representative Grier Hopkins
Representative Tiffany Zulkosky

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Chris Tuck
Representative DeLena Johnson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 109

"An Act relating to residency requirements for public school enrollment for certain children of active duty military members."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 136

"An Act relating to public school funding for social and emotional learning; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 109

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY CHILDREN SCHOOL RESIDENCY WAIVER

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) LEDOUX

03/25/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/25/19	(H)	MLV, EDC
04/09/19	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
04/09/19	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
04/11/19	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
04/11/19	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
04/16/19	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
04/16/19	(H)	Heard & Held

04/16/19 (H) MINUTE (MLV)
 04/18/19 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
 04/18/19 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/23/19 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
 04/23/19 (H) Moved CSHB 109 (MLV) Out of Committee
 04/23/19 (H) MINUTE (MLV)
 04/24/19 (H) MLV RPT CS (MLV) NT 6DP
 04/24/19 (H) DP: KOPP, THOMPSON, JACKSON, TARR,
 TUCK, LEDOUX
 05/08/19 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 136

SHORT TITLE: PUBLIC SCHOOLS: SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) HOPKINS

04/16/19 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/16/19 (H) EDC, FIN
 05/08/19 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE GABRIELLE LEDOUX
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As the prime sponsor, introduced HB 109.

DENEEN TUCK, Staff
 Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative LeDoux, prime sponsor of HB 109, provided information regarding the proposed committee substitute for the bill.

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Regional Liaison
 U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)
 Washington, DC

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to HB 109.

HEIDI TESHNER, Director
 Division of Administrative Services
 Department of Education & Early Development (DEED)
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to HB 109.

DEENA BISHOP, PhD, Superintendent
 Anchorage School District (ASD)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 109.

MICHAEL GRAHAM, Chief Academic Officer

Anchorage School District (ASD)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided testimony related to HB 109.

JAMES ANDERSON, Chief Financial Officer

Anchorage School District

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 109.

TANIA CLUCAS, Staff

Representative Grier Hopkins

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Hopkins, prime sponsor of HB 136, provided detailed information related to the bill.

JAN DAVIS, SEL and Positive Behavior Coordinator

Anchorage School District (ASD)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony related to HB 136.

JENNIFER KNUTSON, PhD, Senior Director

Department of Teaching and Learning

Anchorage School District (ASD)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony related to HB 136 and spoke in support of the bill.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:04:26 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ANDI STORY called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Representatives Hopkins, Zulkosky, Drummond, and Story were present at the call to order.

HB 109-MILITARY CHILDREN SCHOOL RESIDENCY WAIVER

[8:06:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 109, "An Act relating to residency requirements for public school enrollment for certain children of active duty military members." [Before the committee was CSHB 109(MLV).]

CO-CHAIR STORY drew attention to the paper copy of [the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 109, labeled 31-LS0728\S, Caouette, 4/24/19,] provided on the dais before each member.

CO-CHAIR STORY requested the sponsor to explain the background and reason for the [proposed CS].

8:07:00 AM

REPRESENTATIVE GABRIELLE LEDOUX, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HB 109, requested her aide, Ms. Deneen Tuck, to explain the background and reason for the [proposed CS].

8:07:25 AM

DENEEN TUCK, Staff, Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative LeDoux, prime sponsor of HB 109, explained that after CSHB 109(MLV) was reported from the House Special Committee on Military & Veterans' Affairs, it was suggested by Representative Tarr that the word "guardian" be added where ever "parent" is mentioned in the bill. The word "parent" occurs in Section 1, page 1, lines 6 and 10, and page 2, line 3.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX stated that HB 109 comes from a request by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). She explained that DOD is trying to get all states to pass bills which allow parents or guardians of school-age children to enroll their children in school before they arrive in Alaska and become Alaska residents. For example, if a parent or guardian received transfer papers in May but would not arrive in Alaska until September, the bill would allow the children to be enrolled during the school's regular enrollment period. This is important for high school students where courses for graduation fill up relatively quickly or where a student has courses or electives that are needed for admittance to the college of their choice, and if the student waited until arriving in Alaska those courses may already be filled. It's also important for when a parent or guardian wants to enroll a child into a charter school, which is done through lotteries and that process may start prior to [the child's] arrival in Alaska.

8:10:09 AM

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS requested clarification about which bill version the committee is working from.

CO-CHAIR STORY replied the committee is considering Version S, [the proposed committee substitute for HB 109, labeled 31-LS0728\S, Caouette, 4/24/19].

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked whether other states have already passed this bill.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX offered her understanding that some states have passed it, but she doesn't know the number.

8:11:09 AM

The committee took a brief at-ease.

8:11:35 AM

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 109, labeled 31-LS0728\S, Caouette, 4/24/19, as the working document.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND objected for purposes of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX suggested that Ms. Tammie Perreault of DOD might be able to answer Representative Hopkins' question about how many other states have adopted this bill.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND removed her objection to adopting the proposed CS as the working document. There being no further objection, Version S was before the committee.

8:12:32 AM

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Regional Liaison, U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), addressed the question from Representative Hopkins about how many states have adopted this or a similar law. She said that, currently, at least six states have passed this. Arizona, California, Washington, and Nebraska have already passed bills. It has been introduced and is in the process of being passed in about six other states, including Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. The DOD foresees a wave of states passing a bill this legislative session. The DOD further foresees that over 20

states will have passed a bill by the end of the next legislative session. This is a very new initiative with DOD, so Alaska is early in the process, but it is something that has been vetted through the next three states and is an important part of improving military child implementation of education in the state of Alaska.

[8:14:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY posed a scenario in which a student enrolls after the headcount has been done for the base student allocation. She inquired whether resources would be there to meet the needs of that student.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX deferred to the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) for an answer. She stated she isn't sure how this bill would change that because the students are going to be coming in one way or another.

CO-CHAIR STORY offered her understanding that even if students not from the military move from another district or state after the count date they are not counted and therefore she doesn't believe this bill would correct that.

[8:16:07 AM](#)

HEIDI TESHNER, Director, Division of Administrative Services, Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), replied to Representative Zulkosky's question. She explained that if a student is enrolled in the school district for the count period, that student will be counted. If a student enrolls after the count period or anytime during the count period, that student would not be funded through the formula as it currently stands.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY surmised that is true for any student enrolling late, not just students with parents or guardians in military service.

MS. TESHNER responded correct.

[8:17:07 AM](#)

DEENA BISHOP, PhD, Superintendent, Anchorage School District (ASD), testified that the Municipality of Anchorage and the Anchorage School District are honored to serve the families and children of the military. Presently, [ASD] serves about 8,000 [military] students, or 15 percent of [ASD's] total student

population. The functions and people of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) play a major role in the community and state.

DR. BISHOP said this bill would allow and ensure that a school district considers students as residents of the district and offers the ability to admit them into school when their parents or guardians are serving as active duty members. The bill is the least [the state] can do for its highly valued men and women of the U.S. military.

DR. BISHOP related that ASD's goal is to transition the young people of military families effectively, efficiently, and as easily as possible. The district desires to make its military families' station in Alaska the best it can be, and this includes schooling. This bill would offer peace of mind to military families with school-aged children as they move to Alaska. It would also allow school districts to plan for their arrival by planning for courses and classes that will be ready and waiting for them. She offered the Anchorage School District's full support and appreciation for HB 109.

[8:18:58 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND inquired whether the Anchorage School District has to-date experienced any enrollment issues with children of military families due to the lack of the language in this bill.

DR. BISHOP answered that ASD has not, but she sees the bill as not necessarily the impetus on the school district doing its work. The bill speaks to what is being provided, the customer satisfaction, which is that military families have peace of mind in knowing that their school district will work with them.

[8:20:17 AM](#)

MICHAEL GRAHAM, Chief Academic Officer, Anchorage School District (ASD), seconded Dr. Bishop's statements and said ASD has not had problems with the military. The district has two military liaison officers who help families navigate in this regard and the bill would provide peace of mind. The schools and principles of the ASD are aware and will do whatever is necessary to make things work, whether the students are coming in or transferring out.

MR. GRAHAM addressed the question about funding when a student is not yet there during the counts. He noted that military and other students leave the district after the count time and the

district doesn't lose that money, so things likely balance out closely.

[8:21:44 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY referred to a letter in the committee packet from Patrick Mayer, President, Alaska Superintendents Association, which notes that the bill seems to be written for incoming students. Mr. Mayer suggests that clarifying language may be needed to address the issue of students who are leaving and no longer in Alaska. Co-Chair Story asked what the current practice is for a student who is outgoing and whether the student could stay in the district.

DR. BISHOP replied that ASD disagrees with that letter and does not believe the bill needs to speak to outgoing students. The district treats outgoing students as individuals, she said. If a student leaves during the middle of the year, ASD has always worked with the families and the commissioner of DEED to get permission for the student to continue his/her education for graduation or for a family hardship, such as when a parent or guardian is deployed and leaves the state. She said that as the ASD superintendent she would not support any kind of language that would limit or make it more difficult for ASD to serve. She pointed out that ASD has never had an abuse of this issue, it is simply about meeting graduation requirements or hardships.

CO-CHAIR STORY offered her understanding of this issue for when someone is in a current year and must move but wants to stay enrolled in the district. She inquired about subsequent years.

DR. BISHOP responded that ASD does not have that issue and has not had that request. The ASD is not a national correspondence, it serves state students.

[8:25:37 AM](#)

JAMES ANDERSON, Chief Financial Officer, Anchorage School District, related that he spent 27 years on active duty with the U.S. Army prior to retiring four years ago in Anchorage. Each of his daughters attended nine different schools as they progressed from kindergarten through graduation. Both times when his family moved to Anchorage his children were registered, knew what was going to happen, knew they would get the classes they needed, and felt comfortable before even hitting the ASD schoolgrounds. This is not necessarily the norm; his children attended schools that were not as welcoming and were not as

helpful, which created chaos for his kids in trying to figure out what they would be doing. He said he applauds the bill sponsor's efforts and the national efforts to recognize the challenge that military children face. He added that his daughters still call Anchorage home and much of that is how they were welcomed and embraced when coming into the school district.

[8:27:45 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY opened public testimony on HB 109. She closed public testimony after ascertaining no one wished to testify.

CO-CHAIR STORY observed the fiscal note for HB 109 is zero.

[8:28:19 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY held over HB 109.

HB 136-PUBLIC SCHOOLS: SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL LEARNING

[8:28:50 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 136, "An Act relating to public school funding for social and emotional learning; and providing for an effective date."

[8:29:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS, as the prime sponsor of HB 136, introduced the bill. He said he is honored to sponsor HB 136 as part of the ongoing efforts of the legislature and this committee to take a detailed look at ways to improve how the state prepares young Alaskans for life success through education and job readiness. He explained HB 136 would help Alaska school districts to protect funds for social and emotional learning (SEL) by requiring a percentage of the funds distributed by a formula fund to be allocated to social and emotional learning activities. The necessity of these activities has been recognized by the legislature and would be protected from elimination during these times of budget crisis by the language in HB 136. The bill is not intended to dedicate specific state funds; instead, it would be one-half of one percent of the equivalent of how much money goes from the state to each school district. As the bill is currently written, a grant or a private donation could account for this money.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS noted the committee has heard from many presenters over the session about the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL), otherwise known as soft skills or people skills. For example, before the committee last week Mark Foster noted that, "Social skills tend to be a better predictor of success in life." Representative Hopkins related that these types of skills include motivation, self-restraint, self-reflection, and empathy. Alaska spends more than \$1.5 billion annually on education and workforce development, yet research shows that the most important indicator for future success is thorough and effective social and emotional education, not just concentrating on reading, writing, and math. An investment of one-half of one percent is a very small amount with an incalculable return.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS pointed out that nearly every school district in Alaska currently does work on social and emotional learning in some way. In its current form, HB 136 has no additional cost to the state. The intent and goal of the bill is to ensure that the districts continue to concentrate at a minimum level of their budgets on this important type of curriculum and program, as well as to continue to drive the conversation. He noted the intent is to hold HB 136 in committee and work over the interim with stakeholder groups to further refine the specifics of the bill. He related that there was some concern about starting to dedicate parts of the funding formula and interrupting the work that the districts are doing.

[8:33:00 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked whether HB 136 would create any new programs.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS replied the bill would not create any new programs or specify specifically how the districts need to work on social and emotional learning. The districts would still have flexibility to know what is best for their students and not be mandated by the legislature as to what lessons or programs.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND inquired whether HB 136 would place any restrictions on a district's ability to fund these programs.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS responded it would not.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked why social and emotional learning is necessary in Alaska's schools.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS answered that starting in kindergarten the state tests standards for playing well in the sandbox and working well with others, in an understanding of what it takes to be a stronger functioning member of society as opposed to just learning multiplication tables or the periodic table of elements. This look at social skills goes all the way through high school because they determine future success. There is a wide array of research that backs this up.

[8:34:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY recounted that the committee has talked this year and last about the impact of adverse childhood experiences and the importance of ensuring that children come into the classroom with readiness to learn, which sometimes takes focus in other areas beyond reading, writing, and curriculum. She pointed out that in rural districts the larger districts would probably be better able to absorb this type of dedication/expectation of funds, but that it might be difficult for the smaller districts. She asked whether there has been vetting and conversations with the smaller rural school districts that may have a more difficult time implementing something like this. She suggested that, if not, this work could happen over the interim.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS replied "absolutely" and explained that the original impetus behind the bill was that school districts of all sizes are having to do a lot of health and social service work with students who come to school with adverse childhood experiences, and seeing how that impacted the classrooms. Districts are working hard on preparing the students to learn. A spreadsheet in the committee packet shows how much money it would be for each school district under the bill's current structure - the Anchorage School District is obviously the highest amount, while Pelican is the smallest at [\$2,687], which is not a heavy lift. Representative Hopkins said he has talked to school districts of all sizes. For example, the Tok and Dillingham school district superintendents were excited about the bill and liked that it would remove some of the political dialogue and the political pressure when they are forming their budgets.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS continued his reply. He allowed he has heard concern from the Alaska Association of School Boards and former members of school boards about theoretically getting "the nose of the camel under the tent" such that future legislatures might want to also dedicate a portion of funding toward

something else, and then something else, and then something else. Because he doesn't want to open that door and because he wants to allow flexibility for the districts, he is going to back off mandating a certain amount of money and work with the school boards, superintendents, and school district business officers to find out how to continue to drive that dialogue instead of mandating funding levels.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY said she appreciates this answer. She noted that it would require \$30,000 for one of the school districts in her region, which is a heavy lift for a school district that serves three small villages.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS offered his understanding that funding is tight and said he doesn't want to put on pressure.

[8:39:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY observed that the bill on page 1, line 7, only says "state aid" and nothing about grant money. She suggested that this language be added.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS responded he will look at this to ensure the language is specific on how that funding needs to be shown.

CO-CHAIR STORY complimented the sponsor for the information provided in the packet. She offered her belief that all members of the committee believe in social and emotional learning and wish they could be adding this money to districts and putting in a fiscal note of this amount. Superintendents, parents, teachers, and school board members have talked to committee members about how critical this learning is in school climate and the workplace in life. She mused about investing this money up front and how much cost would be saved in the future for other tough situations the state might find itself in.

[8:40:59 AM](#)

TANIA CLUCAS, Staff, Representative Grier Hopkins, Alaska State Legislature, reviewed the documents provided in the committee packet for HB 136. She brought attention to the sponsor statement, the fiscal note of zero, and the spreadsheet that breaks out the one-half of one percent for each school district. She pointed out that school counselors are considered part of social and emotional learning and therefore in one of the small districts a school counselor would cover what the cost would be. She drew attention to the examples of what already exist in

Alaska for curriculum materials and guidelines for the different school districts. The document with the header "Pre-K" is from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, and that it lists the different standards from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 that are in the Alaska educational guidelines from DEED. The packet also includes a recent report to the Fairbanks School Board and materials on what has been happening in the Fairbanks School District with social and emotional learning. She added that the Juneau School District has provided examples of what it uses for kindergarten through grade 12, which she will be getting to the committee. Another item is an article about social and emotional learning in the classroom and its effects on the students in their long-term success that was referenced by Mr. Mark Foster.

[8:44:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY opened invited testimony on HB 136.

[8:44:32 AM](#)

JAN DAVIS, SEL and Positive Behavior Coordinator, Anchorage School District (ASD), testified that in 2006 the Anchorage School District became the first district in the nation to adopt social and emotional standards. She explained that the ASD's 15 standards for kindergarten through grade 12 are organized into four quadrants. The first is self-awareness, where students are asked to be knowledgeable of their emotions, personal traits, external supports, and personal responsibility. The second is self-management, where students are asked to be capable to manage their emotions, to demonstrate honesty and integrity, to use effective decision-making skills, and to be able to set and achieve goals. The third is social awareness, where students are asked to care about other's perceptions, to care to be able to contribute positively to their community, to respect others' differences, and to read social cues. The fourth is social management, where students are asked to be able to interact effectively with others, to develop constructive relationships, and can prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively.

MS. DAVIS noted that ASD found an area it missed in the initial rollout of its standards - the adult aspect. She explained that if students are being asked to live within these four quadrants, there must be adults who have a mindset that they truly see the student in front of them, believe in the student's capacity to learn and to change their behavior, care about the students and

that their SEL and academic needs are being met, and are responsible to support the students in any way possible to ensure the students are having success academically.

8:47:00 AM

MS. DAVIS stated ASD believes that to have a cohesive SEL program there are three areas that must be had - climate, direct instruction, and integrating SEL into other curricular activities. Addressing the integration of SEL, she explained that this means integrating SEL skills throughout the day in all curricular areas through modeling and instructional practices that promote SEL skills practiced in maximized learning. "The way we teach is as important as what we teach," she said. Allowing students time to enhance their SEL skills while addressing academic content allows for students and for teachers to know that SEL is not just half an hour once a week but needs to be practiced throughout the whole week of school. Hopefully students will apply that ability in other areas of their life.

MS. DAVIS asked the question, "How do we know what we're doing is working?" She explained that this year ASD developed an SEL walkthrough rubric, a tool that provides an external view at the site to see what is happening during a short visit. The three areas of the rubric are: schoolwide culture and environment; classroom instruction; and classroom climate, environment, and management. The idea of the rubric is to give additional data points to the leadership teams at the schools so they can use them to make sound decisions on what their next steps are and to be used as a department to assess the professional development that is needed.

8:48:55 AM

CO-CHAIR STORY requested Ms. Davis to send the SEL walkthrough rubric to the committee. She inquired whether Ms. Davis was previously in Juneau to give a training on aggressors, victims, and bystanders at one of the middle schools.

MS. DAVIS confirmed she gave the training.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND requested Ms. Davis to provide the committee with a written copy of her testimony. She asked what year it was that ASD became first in the U.S. to adopt SEL standards.

MS. DAVIS replied 2006.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND inquired whether there was a trigger to that early adoption or whether it was simply because Anchorage had already been providing SEL training and thought the way to do it would be to solidify it as standards.

MS. DAVIS responded that ASD was already doing lots of social and emotional learning within the district before it knew the term "SEL." The district worked with Search Institute and the institute's four-day Developmental Assets, a foundation that was then used by the district to look at what is needed in a school so that it isn't just hit and miss. The district looks at climate, direct instruction, and infusion of SEL skills to hit all the needs of all students and adults.

[8:50:44 AM](#)

JENNIFER KNUTSON, PhD, Senior Director, Department of Teaching and Learning, Anchorage School District (ASD), testified that the Anchorage School District has been implementing SEL for over 20 years. For the last eight years ASD has been participating nationally through a collaborating districts initiative. She said SEL involves teaching skills that students - and adults - need to be successful at school as well as at home, in the community, and in the workplace.

DR. KNUTSON noted Ms. Davis talked about how the ASD embeds SEL throughout the day and said she will discuss the other two prongs of how the ASD looks at SEL. She explained that those two prongs are through climate in the schools and through direct teaching of those SEL skills. She said social and emotional learning was first implemented in ASD schools by creating a safe and respectful learning environment where students feel connected to the schools, the adults who are working with them, and their peers. Examples of the work done in the district to build a positive climate include teachers greeting students as they enter the class and creating social contracts for how to treat each other and work with each other. Also, ASD has been working on reset zones, which are places where students can go when they demonstrate challenging behaviors and where they can work on replacement behaviors and have restorative conversations so that they can interact in a productive way with peers and adults and get back to their learning. A safe and respectful climate is an essential piece for teaching and learning because without that it is going to be hard to get to the academics. For example, in one school that implemented these climate practices the suspensions went down from 286 last year to 85 this year.

8:53:15 AM

DR. KNUTSON said the third piece around SEL that is emphasized by ASD is using evidence-based programs. Specific skills such as problem solving, listening to others, and being self-aware of emotions and how other people are feeling, must be intentionally taught just like reading and math skills are taught, especially at elementary and middle school levels. Students who might be experiencing more challenging behaviors or experiencing trauma receive additional support and individualized instruction on SEL skills to help them cope during the day. When the three prongs of embedding SEL throughout the day, climate, and direct teaching are done together, changes are seen in academic achievement, office discipline referrals go down, families feel more connected, and students feel more connected. It is a necessary part of the educational system.

DR. KNUTSON specified that the Anchorage School District funds all its SEL work through multiple funding sources, including grants, federal title funds, and general funds, because SEL is important. Even without this bill, she said, all school districts should be including this as a foundation to the education that they are providing to students. She stated that ASD fully supports HB 136.

8:55:06 AM

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked how the Anchorage School District could adapt if class sizes suddenly rose should the governor's proposed budget cuts occur.

DR. KNUTSON replied that increasing the number of students in the classroom has two issues. The first is a space and management issue within the classroom and fitting that many bodies in a classroom. The second issue is to individually meet the needs of all the students in a classroom. The district would have to look at how it educates kids and how it provides services to them. This is where the district's SEL work comes into play, because it will require talking about interacting with each other and how the district might move classrooms, share students, and do different ways of educating kids. More kids in a classroom presents a real challenge and delivery models would have to be looked at.

8:56:43 AM

CO-CHAIR STORY requested Dr. Knutson to provide the committee with a list of the evidence-based programs. She suggested that perhaps the Alaska Association of School Boards could let the committee know if there is such a list to ensure that evidence-based programs are being practiced for social and emotional learning within the state.

[8:57:10 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY opened public testimony on HB 136. She closed public testimony after ascertaining no one wished to testify.

[8:57:34 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY held over HB 136.

[8:58:16 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[8:58:42 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:59 a.m.