

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 10, 2020
10:10 a.m.

10:10:23 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Johnston called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Jennifer Johnston, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Ortiz, Vice-Chair
Representative Ben Carpenter
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Bart LeBon
Representative Kelly Merrick
Representative Colleen Sullivan-Leonard
Representative Cathy Tilton
Representative Adam Wool

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Gary Knopp

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins, Sponsor; Erin Harrington, Staff, Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins; Representative Andi Story, Sponsor; Mary Hakala, Staff, Representative Andi Story; Stephanie Butler, Executive Director, Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education, Department of Education and Early Development; Deb Riddle, Division Operations Manager, Department of Education and Early Development.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Sondra Meredith, Teacher Certification Administrator, Department of Education and Early Development; Brandon Locke, World Languages and Immersion Programs, Anchorage School District; Cordelia Kellie, Alaska Native Language

Revitalization Community, Anchorage; Margie Dashevsky, Self, Anchorage.

SUMMARY

HB 24 LIMITED TEACHER CERTIFICATES; LANGUAGES

HB 24 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 155 AK PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP; ELIGIBILITY

HB 155 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 181 PUBLIC SCHOOLS: MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

HB 181 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

Co-Chair Johnston reviewed the agenda for the day.

#hb24

HOUSE BILL NO. 24

"An Act relating to instruction in a language other than English; and relating to limited teacher certificates."

10:11:10 AM

Co-Chair Johnston indicated the bill sponsor was not yet available.

10:11:20 AM

AT EASE

10:12:15 AM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Johnston indicated Vice-Chair Ortiz had joined the meeting.

REPRESENTATIVE JONATHAN KREISS-TOMPKINS, SPONSOR, indicated the bill was related to immersion language. He referenced HB 102 from the previous session that died on the floor. The bill related to the growing trend of immersion languages in the country. There was a problem getting

immersion language teachers. He explained there were 2 problems related to immersion languages. He mentioned Anchorage's immersion language programs.

10:15:08 AM

ERIN HARRINGTON, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE JONATHAN KREISS-TOMPKINS, introduced herself. She stated that the certificate was very limited. She remarked that the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) would have the criteria and the bill created a narrow path to ensure that the certificates were properly used for immersion language instruction.

Representative Sullivan-Leonard asked what the state had available for those teachers already in place.

Ms. Harrington broadly spoke that there were a number of certificates available for instructors. She stated that they presented some limitations, but for those teachers that could check all boxes, they could make it into the classroom.

Co-Chair Johnston indicated a testifier online.

Representative Sullivan-Leonard was happy to hear from Ms. Meredith.

10:18:52 AM

SONDRA MEREDITH, TEACHER CERTIFICATION ADMINISTRATOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT (via teleconference), explained the different certificates.

Representative Josephson asked about a dearth of applicants when there was an opening and vacancy.

Ms. Harrington understood that depending on the language they could run into specific challenges. She deferred to Mr. Locke to address the specifics.

Representative Josephson wondered whether there was anticipation for the districts to treat the certified people as a Type A certificate for salary and benefit purposes.

Ms. Harrington responded that it would be treated on a district basis, because bargaining agreements occurred on a district basis. She noted that it was a concern about ensuring that these people not be treated as lesser instructors, so there was conversation with the Anchorage School District on that issue. She noted that there was a note in the packet from the Anchorage School District that assured that the instructors be treated the same as any other teacher as it relates to salary, retirement, and benefits.

Representative Josephson was concerned because he had worked hard to get a master's degree in order to teach. He reference Version E of the bill on the top of page 2. It ensured that the person was competence as a teacher. He thought there were 2 aspects to competence: Competence as a teacher and of the subject matter.

Ms. Harrington referred to Section B. The Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) would have to write regulations that the instruction would have to ensure that the correct regulations and requirements were in place for hiring. She also indicated a school district would have to be nominated by the school district. Mr. Locke could speak to the process of recruiting teachers from other countries.

[10:26:29 AM](#)

Representative Tilton referred to the sponsor statement which mentioned outcomes. She asked if the sponsor had any metrics.

Ms. Harrington responded that in general, it was found that students that were instructed in immersion programs were productive in general and in results in English. She provided an example of elementary students and the positive results that came with learning an additional language.

Vice-Chair Ortiz thought the definition allowed the teaching of everything. He was confused about how the subject area would be limited.

Ms. Harrington responded that in the K-6 environment, the goal was to have 60 percent of the day be the student's language of regular use. It was best to have a subject matter taught in the language they use regularly. She indicated Mr. Locke could make additional comments. At no

point did the bill sponsor believe that a child be learning solely in another language.

[10:31:14 AM](#)

Vice-Chair Ortiz asked if an instructor specializing in immersion language would be the only teacher in the room.

Ms. Harrington responded in the negative, and stated that there would be 2 teachers for every child.

Vice-Chair Ortiz thought Ms. Harrington had spoken as if there were already "Certificate M" in place. He wondered what would be added to what was offered through Certificate M.

Ms. Harrington replied that the immersion setting, the full wrap-around aspect, was what helped a child to acquire a language.

Co-Chair Johnston indicated Representative Wool had joined the meeting.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins added that Type M certificate was too narrow.

[10:35:01 AM](#)

Co-Chair Foster noted that some colleges required a year or two of language prior to college. He wondered if the instruction from an immersion program would qualify for that requirement.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins thought that it would be determined by the school district. He provided an example of a Native immersion language program.

Representative LeBon shared a personal experience. His daughter began in an immersion program learning Japanese. He provided further detail of the program and its benefits for his daughter. He recalled that the Japanese instructor remained with the regular instructor in the classroom.

Representative Josephson noted the value of a real immersion program. He stressed that an elementary teacher had a real skill set. He was concerned that the level of

schooling for immersion instructors was much less than for real teachers.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins answered that there were many safeguards in place, such as the school board had to vote on the certification of the teacher. Finally, the person had to get support by the State Board of Education. The certificate was designed for professionals. He thought the program was designed with rigor in mind. He shared the concerns of Representative Josephson.

Co-Chair Johnston asked to move to the fiscal note and the sectional. She directed Ms. Harrington to review the sectional.

[10:44:21 AM](#)

Ms. Harrington reviewed the sectional analysis:

Sectional Analysis | CSHB 24 (L and C) - Limited Language Immersion Teacher Certificates

Section 1. Amends 14.20 with a new section, 14.20.023, Limited language immersion teacher certificates.

Page 1, Lines 1 to 4

Title change to reflect new structure of the bill.

Page 1, Line 7 to 11: 14.20.023(a)

Gives the Department of Education the ability to issue a limited language immersion teacher certificate.

Page 1, Line 12 to Page 2, Line 5: 14.20.023(b)

A person may only receive a limited language immersion teacher certificate if they demonstrate "instructional skills and subject matter expertise sufficient to assure the public that the person is competent as a teacher." This language is used in current law, and like in current law, the state board of education is empowered to write regulations interpreting it.

The state board of education's regulations may require that a limited certificate holder undertake additional academic training.

Page 2, Lines 6 to 13: 14.20.023(c)

Limited language immersion teacher certificates can only be issued to a person if the school board of the district in which the person will teach has requested a limited certificate for that specific person. The limited certificate is valid only in the district that makes the request.

Page 2, Lines 14 to 17: 14.20.023(d)

Gives the state board of education authority to write regulations implementing AS 14.20.025. Provides that the regulations cannot require a certificate applicant to achieve a minimum score on an exam unless that exam is given in the instructional language the March 2, 2020 certificate will be valid for (e.g. a teacher who will be teaching only in German or Inupiaq cannot be required to pass an exam given in English).

Page 2, Lines 18 to 24: 14.20.023(e)

Limited certificates are initially valid for one year. Terms and lengths of extension and renewal shall be set by the state board of education. In order for a limited certificate to be extended or renewed, the school board that initially requested the certificate must certify that the certificate holder has demonstrated skills in classroom instruction and student assessment.

Page 2, Lines 25 to 31: 14.20.023(f)

Section (f) differentiates between teachers of Alaska Native languages and world languages for the purposes of certificate renewal. World language teachers (described as those teaching a language that is not an Alaska Native language) are limited to five years of licensure under the limited teacher certificate offered in AS 14.20.023. Teachers of Alaska Native languages may hold these certificates for longer than five years.

Section 2. Amends AS 44.33.520(a)

This section changes the name of the Alaska Native Language and Preservation Council to the Council for Alaska Native Languages.

Section 3. Amends AS 44.33.520(c)

This section increases the number of seats on the Council for Alaska Native Languages (formerly ANLPAC) from five to seven members.

Section 4. Revisor's Instructions

This section provides direction to the Revisor of Statutes to make corresponding changes in statutes that reference the renamed Council of Alaska Native Languages.

Ms. Meredith reviewed the fiscal note by the Department of Education and Early Development.

Co-Chair Johnston wondered whether the \$6000 was funds for the Department of Law.

Ms. Meredith responded in the affirmative. She stated that the money was intended to support the processes to draft and work with the Department of Law to prepare the regulations for the regulatory process.

Representative Carpenter wondered why there was an increase to the number of seats to the Council on Native Languages.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins responded that it was in response to a request, and it did not have any fiscal impact.

[10:50:26 AM](#)

Representative Carpenter asked about exclusions for members of the legislature to be able to serve on the board.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins responded that there were advisory members of the council, but that there were 5 core positions appointed by the governor

Representative Carpenter responded in the negative. He was referencing the limitation of the people in the legislature being able to serve on the board.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins replied that the language was already in statute.

[10:52:41 AM](#)

Co-Chair Johnston invited Mr. Locke to limit his testimony to 4 minutes.

BRANDON LOCKE, WORLD LANGUAGES AND IMMERSION PROGRAMS, ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT (via teleconference), reported that the school district had about 3,000 students involved in immersion programs in the school district. He explained the different programs, and languages that were offered.

[10:57:20 AM](#)

Representative Josephson was good friend with Mr. Cooley and Mr. Dirson in his district. He asked how many teacher would be available to take his place.

Mr. Locke responded that the school district had several more applicants for non-immersion position rather than an immersion position.

Representative Josephson asked if there just were not many applicants.

Mr. Locke responded that there were very few.

[11:00:30 AM](#)

Representative Wool noted that teachers who had a first language other than English, were better speakers in that first language. He wondered how long the program had been around, and the number of applicants.

Mr. Locke commented that the programs were new, so district did not have any applicants.

Representative Wool talked about successes in the standard public school. He wondered if success was based on the number of teachers.

Mr. Locke replied that DEED had a variety of certifications, and there were some emergency certificates. He remarked that of the elementary immersion teachers, there were also a variety that were sponsored on a Visa through the federal government for a minimum of three years.

Co-Chair Johnston wanted to finish invited testimony.

[11:05:06 AM](#)

CORDELIA KELLIE, ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION COMMUNITY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of HB 24. She stressed that her time was spent attempting to revitalize the Native languages in the state. She understood that there were barriers to grow immersion in schools. She stressed that there was a hope to build those Alaska Native language immersion programs in schools in real time.

Co-Chair Johnston OPENED public testimony.

[11:11:18 AM](#)

MARGIE DASHEVSKY, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. She indicated there was a great need in Alaska for language immersion programs.

Co-Chair Johnston CLOSED public testimony.

Co-Chair Johnston indicated the committee would hold off hearing HB 181.

Representative Wool asked about whether a school district could hire a teacher using the certificate, or whether it was only for immersion school.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins responded that it was not the intent of the legislation, so effectively that could not occur.

Representative Wool referred to the type M certification. He asked if it was insufficient, so that was the reason for the legislation.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins responded that the current type M certificate was not sufficient for immersion language teaching.

Representative Wool wondered about a typical applicant who might be from another country.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins suspected the regulations would be established to ensure proper qualifications.

[11:15:28 AM](#)

Representative Josephson asked why there was a limitation on world languages of four years.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins responded the teachers would ultimately receive fully traditionally certification, so the immersion certificate would be considered a "steppingstone."

Representative Wool asked about the 5-year limitation. He wondered if tenure applied to the program participants.

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins agreed to provide that information.

HB 24 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#hb155

HOUSE BILL NO. 155

"An Act relating to eligibility for the Alaska performance scholarship program."

[11:17:44 AM](#)

Co-Chair Johnston invited the presenters to the table.

REPRESENTATIVE ANDI STORY, SPONSOR, read the prepared sponsor statement:

The goal of HB 155 is to allow Career Technical Education (CTE) courses to count towards eligibility for the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS). All too often students who desire CTE classes do not have room in their schedule to simultaneously pursue a CTE track and meet APS eligibility.

HB 155 recognizes the importance of CTE for all students, whether they are headed to college, apprenticeships, postsecondary training or entering the workforce.

National research tells us that graduation rates are higher for students who take CTE courses, particularly those who take two or more courses as part of a coordinated program of study. These students are often referred to as "concentrators". In Alaska, data shows

that students who are CTE concentrators are 19 percent more likely to graduate than their counterparts.

HB 155 offers three avenues for a student to incorporate CTE courses in their APS application. Under both the math/science and social studies/language curriculum options a student may replace one credit of social studies with one credit of CTE. (Note - A credit is equivalent to one year, or two semesters of course work.)

For students pursuing a more rigorous CTE track, HB155 allows a student to replace two years of world language with two years of CTE, with one year required to be in a sequence of increasing rigor within a career cluster.

Financial assistance provided by APS is vital to many young Alaskans and it is important that students who choose a path that includes CTE have access to these resources.

Career and Technical Education offers students the opportunity to apply knowledge in a real-world context, develop practices that enrich their lives, and attain skills that can lead to skilled jobs and future occupations.

Representative Story continued that the bill had 2 zero fiscal notes, and stressed that the bill was important to students

[11:22:56 AM](#)

MARY HAKALA, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE ANDI STORY, read from the Sponsor Statement (copy on file):

The goal of HB 155 is to allow Career Technical Education (CTE) courses to count towards eligibility for the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS). All too often students who desire CTE classes do not have room in their schedule to simultaneously pursue a CTE track and meet APS eligibility.

HB 155 recognizes the importance of CTE for all students, whether they are headed to college,

apprenticeships, postsecondary training or entering the workforce.

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Financial assistance provided by APS is vital to many young Alaskans and it is important that students who choose a path that includes CTE have access to these resources.

Career and Technical Education offers students the opportunity to apply knowledge in a real world context, develop practices that enrich their lives, and attain skills that can lead to skilled jobs and future occupations.

[11:24:39 AM](#)

Ms. Hakala directed attention to the scholarship checklist (copy on file):

CS HB155 (EDC) offers three options for students to apply CTE credits to Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) eligibility:

- A) A student may replace one credit social studies with one credit CTE; or
- B) A student may replace two credits world language with two credits CTE, one year of which is sequentially more rigorous within a career cluster; or
- C) A student may replace one credit social studies with one credit CTE

One credit is equivalent to one year, or two semesters (or semester equivalents) of course work.

11:28:04 AM

Ms. Hakala pointed out that there was an addendum to the collaboration, which reflected the collaborative process for advanced career technical education.

Co-Chair Johnston asked for a sectional review.

Ms. Hakala was happy to provide one.

Co-Chair Johnston invited Stephanie Butler to the table to review the fiscal notes.

11:30:02 AM

STEPHANIE BUTLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA COMMISSION ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, discussed the fiscal notes.

Representative Josephson thought the representative had made a good case about graduation rates, economic benefit, and capturing student interest. He had concerns about his certificate in History. He had worries about the country following the rule of law.

Ms. Hakala spoke of struggling in looking at the various requirements. Social Studies offered some wiggle room. Social Studies covered a diverse set of courses compared to Math.

Representative Wool thought the bill would bump foreign languages which the committee had just been discussing in the previous bill. He did not think wood shop was as difficult as English. He queried a list of CTE courses.

Representative Story deferred to DEED. She remarked that there was an attempt to get more rigorous career technical options for students, but those courses were not listed on the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

Representative Wool wondered if some credits would still be required for graduation.

Representative Story responded that it would be important to consult a career counselor regarding the specific career requirements.

[11:37:14 AM](#)

DEB RIDDLE, DIVISION OPERATIONS MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, indicated there was a website to refer to that listed the required courses.

Representative Carpenter asked for a refresher of Math and Science requirements.

Ms. Hakala responded that under Science, the state requirement were two credits and one health or physical education credit. The math had three credits, social studies had three credits, and language arts had three credits.

Representative Carpenter wondered if the class level mattered in the required credits.

Ms. Hakala replied that the class level was not specified in statute.

[11:40:13 AM](#)

Representative Sullivan-Leonard noted the current vocational schools, and wondered whether they were recipients of the scholarship.

Ms. Hakala responded that a CTE track existed, but also stressed that it was not in existence. She remarked that the current Alaska Performance Scholarship statute specifically supported a CTE award after graduation, but did not provide a pathway to receive that award. She stated that the legislation would resolve that disconnect by ensuring high school students had a pathway that maintained rigor, and also provided for a CTE focus. She stated that

the only difference for a CTE student was that they take the Work Keys test, and those students were still held to the same academic and course work standards as any other student applying for the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

Representative Sullivan-Leonard wondered how many additional students were anticipated to receive the scholarship funds.

Representative Story reported that there was not an anticipated increase in number of students to receive the funds.

[11:45:54 AM](#)

Representative Wool wondered how useful the math requirements might be to the career education. He felt that the math requirement could be reexamined, and possibly replaced with a CTE course to increase graduation rates.

Representative Josephson asked Ms. Hakala to provide the list of CTE courses.

Ms. Hakala noted that she had provided the checklist for the current program.

Co-Chair Johnston would be setting the bill aside.

HB 155 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Johnston reviewed the agenda for the afternoon meeting.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[11:49:10 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.