

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 16, 2022

3:34 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Mike Prax  
Representative Mike Cronk

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION: UNDERSTANDING CULTURALLY RELEVANT EDUCATION IN ALASKA

- HEARD

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 20(FIN)

"An Act relating to teaching certificates for teachers holding out-of-state certificates."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 20

SHORT TITLE: OUT OF STATE TEACHER RECIPROCITY

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) STEVENS

01/22/21	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
01/22/21	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/21	(S)	EDC, FIN
03/15/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/15/21	(S)	Heard & Held
03/15/21	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/19/21	(S)	EDC RPT CS 4DP NEW TITLE
03/19/21	(S)	DP: HOLLAND, STEVENS, MICCICHE, BEGICH
03/19/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/19/21	(S)	Moved CSSB 20(EDC) Out of Committee

03/19/21 (S) MINUTE(EDC)  
 03/22/21 (S) EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205  
 03/22/21 (S) <Bill Hearing Canceled>  
 03/29/21 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532  
 03/29/21 (S) Heard & Held  
 03/29/21 (S) MINUTE(FIN)  
 04/06/21 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532  
 04/06/21 (S) Scheduled but Not Heard  
 04/19/21 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532  
 04/19/21 (S) Heard & Held  
 04/19/21 (S) MINUTE(FIN)  
 04/21/21 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532  
 04/21/21 (S) Moved CSSB 20(FIN) Out of Committee  
 04/21/21 (S) MINUTE(FIN)  
 04/23/21 (S) FIN RPT CS 5DP 1NR 1AM NEW TITLE  
 04/23/21 (S) DP: STEDMAN, BISHOP, HOFFMAN, OLSON,  
 VON IMHOF  
 04/23/21 (S) NR: WILSON  
 04/23/21 (S) AM: WIELECHOWSKI  
 05/03/21 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)  
 05/03/21 (S) VERSION: CSSB 20(FIN)  
 05/04/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
 05/04/21 (H) EDC, FIN  
 05/10/21 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106  
 05/10/21 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --  
 02/16/22 (H) EDC AT 3:30 PM DAVIS 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

JOSHUA GILL, Principal  
 Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion Elementary School  
 Bethel, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Co-provided a PowerPoint presentation on understanding culturally-relevant education in Alaska.

ATAN' WINKELMAN, Education Specialist  
 Yukon-Koyukuk School District  
 Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Co-provided a PowerPoint presentation on understanding culturally-relevant education in Alaska.

SENATOR GARY STEVENS  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, offered a brief introduction to CSSB 20(FIN).

TIM LAMKIN, Staff  
Senator Gary Stevens  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented CSSB 20 (FIN) and gave a sectional analysis on behalf of Senator Stevens, prime sponsor.

SONDRA MEREDITH, Teacher Certification Administrator  
Department of Education and Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** provided information during the hearing on CSSB 20 (FIN).

DEENA BISHOP, PhD, Superintendent  
Anchorage School District  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the hearing in support of CSSB 20 (FIN).

TAMMIE PERREAUULT, Northwest Regional Liaison  
Military Community and Family Policy  
U.S. Department of Defense  
Seattle, Washington

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the hearing on CSSB 20 (FIN).

TOM KLAAMEYER, President  
National Education Association-Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of CSSB 20 (FIN).

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

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**CO-CHAIR ANDI STORY** called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. Representatives Gillham, Zulkosky, Hopkins, Drummond, and Story were present at the call to order.

#### **PRESENTATION: Understanding Culturally Relevant Education in Alaska**

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CO-CHAIR STORY announced that the first order of business would be a presentation on understanding culturally relevant education in Alaska.

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JOSHUA GILL, Principal, Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion Elementary School, co-provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "Ayaprun Elitnaurvik" [hard copy included in the committee packet]. Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, a Yup'ik Immersion school in Bethel, was founded by a group of University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) instructors, parents, and elders. In 1999 the Yup'ik Immersion Steering Committee obtained its first charter. The mission of Ayaprun Elitnaurvik is to provide a high quality Yugtun immersion education and empower its students by strengthening their knowledge, use, and understanding of Yup'ik core values, language, and culture. The school's curriculum is based on the English State Standards; however, it's often taught in Yup'ik. Yup'ik dancing is also taught three times a week. Ayaprun Elitnaurvik applied to the State Board of Education to add seventh and eighth grade in the fall of 2022. In 2015, the Kilbuck school, which housed Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, burned down. Since the fire, Ayaprun Elitnaurvik has been housed in the Kipusvik Building, a grocery store that was renovated in an open concept style. The new location is scheduled to open in fall 2025. Ayaprun Elitnaurvik's curriculum is highly integrated with Yu'pik culture and subsistence activities.

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ATAN' WINKELMAN, Education Specialist, Yukon-Koyukuk School District, co-provided a PowerPoint presentation, titled "Ayaprun Elitnaurvik" [hard copy included in the committee packet]. She outlined the lesson plans for language arts, social studies, and science, as well as the curriculum-based assessments on phonemic awareness and fluency. The Yugtun proficiency test is given to all K-12 students as a measure of vocabulary, speaking, and listening. In addition, the new reading and writing section of the WIDA-YPT assessment project is being piloted with three sub-tests: oral, cultural language, and literacy.

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MR. GILL relayed that Ayaprun Elitnaurvik had the highest growth rate district wide. Elementary students in the immersion program did not test at proficiency in the lower grades; however, the program had the highest sixth grade proficiency

rate district wide (2019). On average, 55 percent of the school's students that graduated from Bethel Regional High School had a GPA of 3.5 or higher. He credited the high academic cultural expectations; parent involvement; and a local, culturally responsive curriculum with a culturally sensitive environment. In response to committee questions, he explained that kindergarten through second grade students are taught in Yup'ik the majority of the day with English language development each week. Third grade through Sixth grade students are taught in Yup'ik 50 percent of the day and English 50 percent of the day. He said the district has a Department of Academic Program's team that was constantly evaluating state standards to ensure that students and instruction were meeting them in Yugtun and English. The curriculum was financed by BSA funding; however, much of the summer institutes and translations were funded by grants and partnerships.

#### **SB 20-OUT OF STATE TEACHER RECIPROCITY**

[4:28:17 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced that the final order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 20(FIN), "An Act relating to teaching certificates for teachers holding out-of-state certificates."

[4:28:53 PM](#)

SENATOR GARY STEVENS, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, offered that [CSSB 20(FIN)] is a response to a long-standing teacher shortage in Alaska. He explained the proposed bill does not lower the licensing standards for teachers, but simply addresses delays for out-of-state teachers with good standing and places them promptly in Alaskan classrooms.

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TIM LAMKIN, Staff, Senator Gary Stevens, Alaska State Legislature, presented CSSB 20(FIN) on behalf of Senator Stevens, prime sponsor. He said the bill is for teachers with years of experience, who have current, valid, laureled teaching licenses in other states, enabling them to fluidly cross state borders and use that licensed status in Alaska classrooms. He said the bill is not intended to "lower the bar" or to "skirt any level of professional preparedness." He announced that one issue will need to be addressed: states that have developed "alternative paths" to obtain teaching licenses. He proffered

there is a "fairly simple" fix to be explained once the discussion reaches that section.

MR. LAMKIN proceeded to the sectional analysis of CSSB 20(FIN), [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**Sec. 1: AS 14.20.010**, relating to a teaching certificate being required to teach in Alaska, removes the reference of there being a preliminary certificate.

**Sec. 2: AS 14.20.015(a)**, relating to out-of-state teaching certificates, removes reference to there being a preliminary certificate.

MR. LAMKIN referenced a likely change in Section 2 of CSSB 20(FIN) by directing attention to page 2, line 11, which read, "hold a valid teaching certificate of another state". He said this will likely change to "valid regular" or "standard," but before a change is made vernacular used by other states will be referenced. He continued with the next portion of the sectional analysis, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**Sec. 3: AS 14.20.015(b)**, relating to out-of-state teaching certificates, removes a requirement for passing a competency exam, and replaces it with a requirement to complete a college course in Alaska studies and multi or cross-cultural studies within 2 years, and trainings related to sexual assault awareness and suicide prevention within 3 months.

**Sec. 4: AS 14.20.015(c)**, relating to out-of-state teaching certificates, removes reference to there being a preliminary teaching certificate.

**Sec. 5: AS 14.20.015(g)** is added to direct the department to establish regulations to expedite the out-of-state teaching certification application process for military spouses.

**Sec 6: AS 14.20.020(h)**, relating to a requirement to complete a college course in Alaska studies and multi or cross-cultural studies, to allow an out-of-state teacher to receive their Alaska certificate, but to complete those studies within 2 years.

**Sec 7: AS 14.20.020(k)**, relating to the requirement of trainings regarding sexual abuse, and assault awareness, and suicide awareness and prevention to take place before being issued an Alaska teaching certificate, to allow out-of-state certificate holders 3 months to complete such trainings.

**Sec. 8: AS 14.20.015 (d), (e), and (f)**, relating to preliminary teaching certificate employment, tenure and expiration, are repealed.

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REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS announced that licensure reciprocity for military spouses is an issue specifically of interest in Fairbanks. He explained if spouses can go to work quickly, this may be a deciding factor for military families moving to Alaska. He also expressed interest in the details of tenure being repealed in Sec.8.

MR. LAMKIN responded that in the statute, the word "preliminary" in "preliminary teaching certificate" is being removed, thus tenure and other associated terms become moot in this instance. He confirmed tenure would still be available to qualified [out-of-state] teachers once hired.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS suggested [out-of-state] teachers will not be tenured as soon as they are hired, but at the same rate [as resident teachers]. He sought clarification that a preliminary teaching certificate is what [out-of-state] teachers currently receive, requiring them to "jump through the hurdles" to get tenure and other benefits. He stated he understood the proposed legislation would eliminate the preliminary step, allowing these teachers to immediately obtain a teaching certificate in Alaska and then go through the process to make it permanent.

MR. LAMKIN acknowledged this is correct, adding that the coordinator from licensure in the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) should confirm.

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REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS agreed with Senator Stevens, stating that Fairbanks and Kodiak are alike in that military spouses with out-of-state teacher certifications experience delays for licensure in Alaska. He added that in Fairbanks, [out-of-state]

teachers will often become support staff or a paraprofessional even though they are a certified teacher.

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SONDRA MEREDITH, Teacher Certification Administrator, Department of Education and Early Development, validated Representative Hopkin's statement that the proposed change to CSSB 20(FIN) would eliminate the preliminary teaching certificate, allowing out-of-state teachers to obtain a certification in Alaska "day one," instead of waiting until the courses on sexual assault and suicide prevention and other necessary training are complete.

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SENATOR STEVENS responded to Co-Chair Story that he had spoken with various school districts and was assured the three-month deadline is a realistic timeframe to complete the required courses and training.

MR. LAMKIN added the districts have training modules that can be completed in an eight-hour course over an evening or a weekend, thus a two- or three-month timeframe is realistic.

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DEENA BISHOP, PhD, Superintendent, Anchorage School District, presented she is a leader in a large school district and is engaged in research on the issue of teacher certification. She stated CSSB 20(FIN) provides flexibility for school districts at just the right time, as Alaska is not the only state with a teacher shortage. To emphasize the importance of quality of education, she noted there are other quality-of-education bills currently being heard in the legislature. She stressed CSSB 20(FIN) opens avenues for school districts to find top educators. She described the current certification requirements in Alaska as a hindrance that narrows the pool of candidates. From her research she found that many states allow alternative teacher certification programs. These programs do not require a university setting or a student teaching experience, but use a blended approach to certification, including internships, co-teaching, substituting, and other alternative methods. She stated one in five new teachers in the U.S. becomes a teacher through means other than a four-year university degree or master's program. She stated she believes the problem is that Alaska requires student teachers specifically to be professionally certificated. She explained this requirement

denies a professional certificate to individuals who have worked successfully in a classroom for an extended period. She said, "They cannot move beyond the initial certification, so hence there isn't a long-term future for them in our state." Citing studies at the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER), she said more teachers are entering teaching as a second career. She stated she believes these educators offer expertise from the private sector and knowledge from previous upper-level studies. She stated research shows second career educators are more inclined to enter alternative programs to obtain teacher certification. She added the National Council for Teacher Quality found no statistical difference in alternative certification than a traditional university path, emphasizing the intent of the proposed bill will not lower the teaching standards, but grow the candidate pool.

DR. BISHOP posited on how the proposed legislation can help right now. First, she stated that Anchorage School District (ASD) hires out-of-country educators for immersion programs. Due to the individual country's certification requirements, these out-of-country educators may not have traditional student teaching experience, which currently prohibits certification in Alaska. The proposed bill would allow new, internationally certified candidates to move to professional certification without this qualification. Second, she stated that about 7 percent of ASD teachers and certificated staff are military spouses. Once hired through reciprocity, military spouses with out-of-state certifications will begin work directly, making Alaska military bases more attractive for recruits. Third, she addressed supply and demand, stating that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Alaska had a teacher shortage, and that Alaska universities only provide 25 to 30 percent of the open positions for educators in any given year. She summarized that CSSB 20(FIN) directly responds to the needs of students and schools in Alaska by awarding teaching certificates via reciprocity with other states. She affirmed that ASD offers its support of CSSB 20(FIN).

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TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison, Military Community and Family Policy, U.S. Department of Defense, presented that she is a resource for state policy makers who work to address quality of life issues for military families. She stated previous testimony heard on CSSB 20(FIN) is appropriate to support military spouses in Alaska. She notably backed

expediting the application process for military spouses, stating she believes the ability of teachers to "seamlessly continue their career path" can contribute to the overall wellbeing of military families. She explained teachers with out-of-state licenses face obstacles in Alaska that may include requirements for extensive documentation, additional testing and coursework, and delays in application processing. She added the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) finds approximately 34 percent of military spouses require a license to work, teaching being one of the most prevalent. The amount of military spouse population that moves across state lines is 14.5 percent, compared to only 1.1 percent of civilian spouses. Additionally, 68 percent of married service members report their spouse's ability to maintain a career impacts their decision to remain in the military. She emphasized that spouse employment is a military readiness issue.

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REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS inquired whether the proposed bill would help Alaska's standing with DoD's military branches in determining the placement of new base sites.

MS. PERREAULT responded that each of the DoD services has its own formula for base site placement. She stated that there is an effort to coordinate basing decisions within the services.

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CO-CHAIR STORY opened public testimony on CSSB 20(FIN).

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TOM KLAAMEYER, President, National Education Association-Alaska, announced that the National Education Association-Alaska (NEA-Alaska) supports CSSB 20(FIN). He began that Alaska is facing a historical educator shortage with a recruitment and retention crisis. In example, he stated students in Seward started the year without a special education teacher. The Juneau School District (JSD), at one point, had openings for eight special education teachers and for over 40 paraprofessionals. He continued that at present over 800 positions in public education in Alaska remain unfilled. He expressed concern over one unintended consequence of the bill: teacher quality dropping below requirements of teachers who study and train in Alaska. He insisted that the bill should make sure reciprocity is granted only to those who truly have equivalent certificates.

He warned that some states have significantly lowered teaching standards by offering certification programs from for-profit companies. He stated these companies have no connection with institutions of higher education and do not require any time working under a mentor teacher. He interjected that some of these programs do not even require the individual to walk into a classroom, let alone work directly with students. He appreciated that the bill protects requirements to complete the Alaska studies and multi-cultural courses currently required. He commended the proposed change in the bill that requires out-of-state teachers have a "standard" or "regular" certificate from their state of origin to obtain an Alaska teaching certificate. He stated it is important the proposed legislation include specification that this policy would continue in statute beyond the tenure of the current head of DEED.

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CO-CHAIR STORY, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on CSSB 20(FIN).

CO-CHAIR STORY requested that Ms. Meredith clarify the points on the bill that Mr. Klaameyer suggested may lower standards for teacher certification.

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MS. MEREDITH responded that the bill would first eliminate the need for an initial license, instead the qualified individual would be eligible for a regular professional license. This license would be good up to five years with staggered mandatory training requirements. The individual would have 90 days to complete the mandatory training and then two years to complete the two courses. Once an individual passed these benchmarks, instead of reapplying at the end of the current preliminary certificate, he/she would hold a continual five-year certificate. Second, the bill would allow for individuals with many years of teaching experience and licensure in another state "to move right into the professional" without having to take exams that were not required in their original teacher preparation program and licensure. The third part of the bill addresses the out-of-state certificates that would be honored. Now, DEED looks at licensures from other states that are regular certificates, indicating the individual has completed an approved teacher preparation program that includes a component of guidance from an already certified teacher. Moving forward with the proposed legislation, DEED would not require teachers

in Alaska to get the two- or three-year preliminary certificate, instead the department would accept assurances from the individual's origin state that the teachers hold regular certificates.

MS. MEREDITH responded to a follow-up from Co-Chair Story that DEED worked with the sponsor and is comfortable with changes suggested by the bill.

[5:02:19 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced that CSSB 20(FIN) was held over.

[5:02:42 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 5:02 p.m. to 5:53 p.m.

[5:03:53 PM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.