

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 11, 2022

8:12 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 111(FIN) AM

"An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to public schools and school districts; relating to early education programs; relating to funding for early education programs; relating to school age eligibility; relating to reports by the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to reports by school districts; relating to certification and competency of teachers; relating to screening reading deficiencies and providing reading intervention services to public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through three; relating to textbooks and materials for reading intervention services; establishing a reading program in the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to the definition of 'parent' in education statutes; relating to a virtual education consortium; and providing for an effective date."

- FAILED TO MOVE OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 34(JUD)

"An Act relating to a demonstration state-tribal education compact; relating to demonstration state-tribal education compact schools; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HCS CSSB 34(TRB) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 111

SHORT TITLE: EARLY EDUCATION; READING INTERVENTION

SPONSOR(s): EDUCATION

03/24/21	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/24/21	(S)	EDC, FIN
03/26/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/26/21	(S)	Heard & Held
03/26/21	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/29/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/29/21	(S)	Heard & Held
03/29/21	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/31/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/31/21	(S)	Heard & Held
03/31/21	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/07/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
04/07/21	(S)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
04/09/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
04/09/21	(S)	Heard & Held
04/09/21	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/10/21	(S)	EDC AT 10:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
04/10/21	(S)	Heard & Held
04/10/21	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/12/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
04/12/21	(S)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
04/14/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
04/14/21	(S)	Heard & Held
04/14/21	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/16/21	(S)	EDC RPT CS FORTHCOMING 2DP 2NR 1AM
04/16/21	(S)	DP: HOLLAND, STEVENS
04/16/21	(S)	NR: HUGHES, MICCICHE
04/16/21	(S)	AM: BEGICH
04/16/21	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
04/16/21	(S)	Moved CSSB 111(EDC) Out of Committee
04/16/21	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/19/21	(S)	EDC CS RECEIVED NEW TITLE
05/13/21	(S)	FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
05/13/21	(S)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
01/25/22	(S)	FIN AT 1:00 PM SENATE FINANCE 532
01/25/22	(S)	Heard & Held
01/25/22	(S)	MINUTE(FIN)
01/26/22	(S)	FIN AT 1:00 PM SENATE FINANCE 532
01/26/22	(S)	Heard & Held
01/26/22	(S)	MINUTE(FIN)
02/10/22	(S)	FIN AT 1:00 PM SENATE FINANCE 532

02/10/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 02/15/22 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
 02/15/22 (S) Heard & Held
 02/15/22 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
 03/04/22 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
 03/04/22 (S) Heard & Held
 03/04/22 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
 03/15/22 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
 03/15/22 (S) Heard & Held
 03/15/22 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
 03/17/22 (S) FIN AT 1:00 PM SENATE FINANCE 532
 03/17/22 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/11/22 (S) FIN AT 1:00 PM SENATE FINANCE 532
 04/11/22 (S) Moved CSSB 111(FIN) Out of Committee
 04/11/22 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
 04/12/22 (S) FIN RPT CS 3DP 2NR NEW TITLE
 04/12/22 (S) DP: BISHOP, WILSON, WIELECHOWSKI
 04/12/22 (S) NR: STEDMAN, HOFFMAN
 04/12/22 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 04/12/22 (S) VERSION: CSSB 111(FIN) AM
 04/13/22 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/13/22 (H) EDC, FIN
 04/20/22 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
 04/20/22 (H) Heard & Held
 04/20/22 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
 05/10/22 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
 05/10/22 (H) Heard & Held
 05/10/22 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
 05/10/22 (H) FIN AT 9:00 AM ADAMS 519
 05/10/22 (H) <Pending Referral>
 05/11/22 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: SB 34

SHORT TITLE: STATE-TRIBAL EDUCATION COMPACT SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) STEVENS

1/25/2021 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
 1/25/2021 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 1/25/2021 (S) EDC, JUD
 4/21/2021 (S) EDUCATION at 09:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 4/21/2021 (S) Heard & Held
 4/21/2021 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 4/23/2021 (S) EDUCATION at 09:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 4/23/2021 (S) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
 4/23/2021 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 4/28/2021 (S) EDUCATION at 09:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 4/28/2021 (S) Heard & Held

4/28/2021 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 2/11/2022 (S) EDUCATION at 09:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 2/11/2022 (S) Heard & Held
 2/11/2022 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 2/16/2022 (S) EDUCATION at 09:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 2/16/2022 (S) Heard & Held
 2/16/2022 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 2/23/2022 (S) EDUCATION at 09:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 2/23/2022 (S) Heard & Held
 2/23/2022 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 3/3/2022 (S) EDUCATION at 10:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 3/3/2022 (S) Heard & Held -- Please note time change
 --
 3/3/2022 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 3/11/2022 (S) EDUCATION at 09:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 3/11/2022 (S) <Above Item Removed from Agenda>
 3/11/2022 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 3/17/2022 (S) EDUCATION at 09:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 3/17/2022 (S) Moved CSSB 34(EDC) Out of Committee --
 Please
 note time change --
 3/17/2022 (S) Minutes (SEDC)
 3/18/2022 (S) EDC RPT CS 4DP NEW TITLE
 3/18/2022 (S) DP: HOLLAND, MICCICHE, STEVENS, BEGICH
 3/23/2022 (S) FN1: ZERO(EED)
 3/23/2022 (S) JUDICIARY at 01:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 3/23/2022 (S) Heard & Held
 3/23/2022 (S) Minutes (SJUD)
 3/28/2022 (S) JUDICIARY at 01:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 3/28/2022 (S) Moved CSSB 34(JUD) Out of Committee
 3/28/2022 (S) Minutes (SJUD)
 3/30/2022 (S) JUD RPT CS 3DP 1NR NEW TITLE
 3/30/2022 (S) DP: HOLLAND, MEYERS, KIEHL
 3/30/2022 (S) NR: HUGHES
 3/30/2022 (S) FN1: ZERO(EED)
 3/30/2022 (S) RULES TO CALENDAR 3/30/22
 3/30/2022 (S) READ THE SECOND TIME
 3/30/2022 (S) JUD CS ADOPTED UC
 3/30/2022 (S) ADVANCED TO THIRD READING 4/4 CALENDAR
 4/4/2022 (S) READ THE THIRD TIME CSSB 34(JUD)
 4/4/2022 (S) PASSED Y13 N1 E4 A2
 4/4/2022 (S) EFFECTIVE DATE(S) ADOPTED Y14 N- E4 A2
 4/4/2022 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 4/4/2022 (S) VERSION: CSSB 34(JUD)
 4/5/2022 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 4/5/2022 (H) TRB, EDC
 4/5/2022 (H) CROSS SPONSOR(S): FOSTER

4/14/2022 (H) CROSS SPONSOR(S): FIELDS
 4/14/2022 (H) TRIBAL AFFAIRS at 08:00 AM DAVIS 106
 4/14/2022 (H) Heard & Held -- Delayed to 8:30 am --
 4/14/2022 (H) Minutes (HTRB)
 4/25/2022 (H) CROSS SPONSOR(S): ZULKOSKY
 4/26/2022 (H) TRIBAL AFFAIRS at 08:00 AM DAVIS 106
 4/26/2022 (H) Moved HCS CSSB 34(TRB) Out of Committee
 4/26/2022 (H) Minutes (HTRB)
 4/27/2022 (H) TRB RPT HCS(TRB) 4 DP
 4/27/2022 (H) DP: ORTIZ, TARR, FIELDS, ZULKOSKY
 4/27/2022 (H) FN1: ZERO(EED)
 5/2/2022 (H) EDUCATION at 08:00 AM DAVIS 106
 5/2/2022 (H) <Bill Hearing Reschedule to 5/4/22> --
 MEETING
 CANCELED --
 5/4/2022 (H) EDUCATION at 08:00 AM DAVIS 106
 5/4/2022 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled> -- MEETING
 CANCELED
 5/6/2022 (H) EDUCATION at 08:00 AM DAVIS 106
 5/6/2022 (H) Heard & Held - Recessed to a Call of
 the Chair
 5/6/2022 (H) Minutes (HEDC)
 5/11/2022 (H) EDC RPT HCS(TRB) 6DP 1NR
 5/11/2022 (H) DP: CRONK, PRAX, ZULKOSKY, HOPKINS,
 STORY, DRUMMOND
 5/11/2022 (H) NR: GILLHAM
 5/11/2022 (H) FN1: ZERO(EED)
 5/11/2022 (H) EDUCATION at 08:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR GARY STEVENS

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, offered closing remarks on HCS CSSB 34(TRB).

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:12:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HARRIET DRUMMOND called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 7:38 a.m. Representatives Cronk, Gillham, Prax, Zulkosky, Hopkins, Story, and Drummond were present at the call to order.

SB 111-EARLY EDUCATION; READING INTERVENTION

[8:13:02 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND announced that the first order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 111(FIN) am, "An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to public schools and school districts; relating to early education programs; relating to funding for early education programs; relating to school age eligibility; relating to reports by the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to reports by school districts; relating to certification and competency of teachers; relating to screening reading deficiencies and providing reading intervention services to public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through three; relating to textbooks and materials for reading intervention services; establishing a reading program in the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to the definition of 'parent' in education statutes; relating to a virtual education consortium; and providing for an effective date."

[8:13:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY moved to adopt the proposed House committee substitute (HCS) for CSSB 111(EDC), Version 32-LS0485\F, Klein, 5/8/22, as a working document.

[8:14:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX objected. He spoke to his objection, expressing the opinion that it would be difficult to convince the members of the House of Representatives to pass the proposed HCS. He suggested that members would be more familiar with the previous Senate version, CSSB 111(FIN) am, which accomplishes one objection and would more likely pass.

[8:14:48 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY urged the importance of sending the proposed HCS to the House Finance Standing Committee. She speculated that there would be a robust discussion, and all the pieces would be reviewed. She stated that the proposed legislation would be good for students and has components and resources to make a change in reading education statewide.

[8:15:39 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Zulkosky, Hopkins, Story, and Drummond voted in favor of the motion to adopt the proposed HCS for CSSB 111, Version 32-LS0485\F, Klein, 5/8/22, as a working document. Representatives Cronk, Gillham, and Prax voted against it. Therefore, by a vote of 4-3, Version F was before the committee.

[8:16:54 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:16 a.m. to 8:17 a.m.

[8:17:53 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND entertained a motion.

[8:18:11 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY moved to report HCS CSSB 111, Version 32-LS0485\F, Klein, 5/8/22, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

[8:18:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY objected. She spoke to her objection, stating that she would not vote to pass HCS CSSB 111(EDC), [Version F], from committee. She recognized she may be in the minority on the vote but stated that she would like to put concerns on the record for the public. She stated that the committee had worked hard on the proposed legislation to make [Version F] a good bill. The work included: adding protections for Indigenous languages; boosting the base student allocation funding; addressing teacher retention; removing onerous statewide student progression mandates; and strengthening local control [of education policy]. She thanked Co-Chairs Drummond and Story for focusing on the issues that rural districts face and the needs of all of Alaska students, in particular Alaska Native students and immersion students.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY stated that she could support [Version F] if it were in a vacuum. But, she said, "There is clear daylight between the bill that I'm looking at now, and the bill that passed the other body." After hearing discussions in the hallways and the varied discussions in committee, she related that she is not confident all of the positive changes would survive in the end; instead, the final product would closely resemble the Senate's version. She clarified that her stance is not rooted in political achievement or gamesmanship, as she has

heard repeated concerns from constituents and other stakeholders that the Senate's version would unintentionally disadvantage small rural schools, Alaska Native students, and English language learners. She stated that her concerns are rooted in the protection of these groups, and the unintended consequences of the legislation would disproportionately impact these groups, relative to their peers. She stated that the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) already tracks the lowest performing schools and districts in Alaska, the bulk of which are schools in small areas where Alaska Native students are the majority. She opined that, looking at the status quo of the public education system and underachieving students, Alaska is systematically failing the cultural needs of Alaska students in classrooms across the state.

[8:22:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY referenced committee testimony on the Senate's version of the bill, which related that every school district has retention policies. She argued that this is factually incorrect. She pointed out that she has talked with many school districts that do not enforce retention policies, as they believe that retention is not in the best interest of students. She indicated that both co-chairs have acknowledged this on the record. She referenced testimony that conveyed the Senate's version of the bill would not create screeners as a high-stakes tests; however, she pointed out that this version of the bill would create a standardized tool which determines whether a student passes to the next grade level. She reasoned that this is the definition of a high-stakes decision point. She maintained that a high-stakes decision point in standardized screening would not set up the cultural support to help students achieve, particularly in her district. She voiced further concerns that the implementation of the Senate's version of the bill would be reminiscent of the No Child Left Behind Act. She expressed the opinion that this policy had eradicated creativity and multilingualism in classrooms, and the policy ultimately had harmed the inspiration of students to feel a desire to learn. She referenced the proponents of the science of reading philosophy, who have argued that lower income schools have succeeded under this type of legislation. She said, "I want to be really clear that cultural needs are not synonymous with poverty, and that is absolutely a perspective that needs to be set aside."

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY voiced the concern that, relative to the Senate's version, DEED would likely provide an English-speaking

reading specialist from an urban area to remedy low reading scores in multilingual rural districts. She shared that she is from one of the most rural and economically disadvantaged regions in the entire United State, where homes lack running water and reliable broadband. She stated that communities in that region perpetually struggle to recruit and retain teachers. She expressed her distrust that tests could solve the underlying inequities or address the root causes of disparities in educational achievement. She clarified that she does not have the "luxury" to pass a potentially bad policy because she wants "it off my plate." She stated that the effects of bad policy for urban Alaska would be magnified in rural Alaska and could be very detrimental to students and families in those regions.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY continued that [Version F] would implement policies that would benefit rural students by bolstering cultural structure for DEED and districts; but she expressed doubt that this version of the bill would remain intact by final passage. She recommended that committee members consult bill sponsors at the front end of policy making, and at that time it could be determined what actually works in the diverse parts of the state. She recognized that, out of 60 members in the House, she has a limited ability to shape policy. She stated that she is an Alaska Native woman educated in rural Alaska, who thrived under the hard work of a single mom. From this perspective, she expressed the obligation to voice deep concern and discomfort on moving the proposed legislation. She offered the hope that, if [Version F] were to advance, other members would acknowledge the hard work to make sure the policy would not disproportionately disadvantage Alaska Native students and all rural students in the state.

[8:26:36 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:26 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

[8:30:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK thanked Representative Zulkosky for the comments. He stated that many good points had been made in multiple discussions throughout the session. He stated that he supported the original version of the bill but cannot support this version.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY withdrew her objection.

[8:30:41 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives, Hopkins, Story, and Drummond voted in favor of the motion to move HCS CSSB 111, Version 32-LS0485\F, Klein, 5/8/22, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. Representatives Gillham, Zulkosky, Prax, and Cronk voted against it. Therefore, HCS CSSB 111(EDC) failed to move from the House Education Standing Committee by a vote of 3-4.

[8:31:34 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:31 a.m. to 8:34 a.m.

SB 34-STATE-TRIBAL EDUCATION COMPACT SCHOOLS

[8:34:07 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND announced that the final order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL 34(JUD), "An Act relating to a demonstration state-tribal education compact; relating to demonstration state-tribal education compact schools; and providing for an effective date."

[Before the committee was HCS CSSB 34(TRB).]

[8:34:48 AM](#)

SENATOR GARY STEVENS, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau Alaska, provided closing statements on HCS CSSB 34(TRB). He stated that the proposed legislation has gone through several renditions with multiple compromises. He stated that the legislation would give federally recognized tribes in the state and the State Board of Education and Early Development (SBOE) a window of time to negotiate a structure for a state-tribal education compact. It is expected the negotiations would begin immediately and result in a formal proposal for a model that could be introduced to the legislature within the next few years. He stated that state-tribal compacting is an opportunity to embrace the Alaska Indigenous history, culture, and language in curriculum for all students. He reminded the committee members that the legislation would not create compacting; instead, it directs the SBOE and tribes to convene on the topic and return with legislation that can be considered in the future.

[8:36:02 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND, after ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, closed public testimony.

[8:36:29 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY moved to report HCS CSSB 34(TRB) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

[8:36:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK objected. Speaking to his objection, he thanked the bill sponsor for bringing the bill forward. He expressed the opinion that this would be a good step forward for the state. He removed his objection.

[8:37:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM objected. Speaking to his objection, he voiced the concern that the legislation would allow school districts to exist within school districts. He stated that this would allow these districts to receive double funding. He removed his objection.

[8:37:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY expressed appreciation that Representative Gillham removed his objection. She stated that she has worked with tribal health organizations, which has set the stage for tribal compacting in Alaska. Tribal health programs have shown that local control, through local agreements, have transformed the mechanism of health care in Alaska. She stated that to address questions and concerns, like Representative Gillham's point, the tribes and DEED would have a negotiation and consultation process to create a blueprint and demonstration. She referenced that the state has a constitutional obligation to provide public education in schools, so she appreciates the conversation. She reiterated that [HCS CSSB 34(TRB)] would be the vehicle to get to the point where answers could be provided.

[8:39:25 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND stated that there being no more objections, HCS CSSB 34(TRB) was reported out of the House Education Standing Committee.

[8:39:54 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:39 a.m. to 8:42 a.m.

[8:42:52 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND thanked the committee.

[8:43:05 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:43 a.m.