

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

March 30, 2022

9:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Roger Holland, Chair
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair
Senator Shelley Hughes
Senator Tom Begich

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Peter Micciche

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 236

"An Act relating to facilities constituting a school."

- MOVED CSSB 236(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 225

"An Act relating to a paraprofessional training program; creating a teacher resident certificate; creating a teacher residency program; relating to requirements to issue a teacher certificate; relating to subject-matter expert limited teacher certificates; relating to limited teacher certificates; creating a teacher registered apprenticeship program; and creating a teacher registered apprenticeship program fund."

- MOVED CSSB 225(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 236

SHORT TITLE: FACILITIES CONSTITUTING A SCHOOL

SPONSOR(s): EDUCATION

03/18/22	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/18/22	(S)	EDC
03/25/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/25/22	(S)	Heard & Held
03/25/22	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/30/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 225

SHORT TITLE: TEACHER REGISTERED APPRENTICE PROGRAMS

SPONSOR(s): EDUCATION

03/04/22	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/04/22	(S)	EDC, L&C, FIN
03/07/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/07/22	(S)	Heard & Held
03/07/22	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/09/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/09/22	(S)	Heard & Held
03/09/22	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/14/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/14/22	(S)	Heard & Held
03/14/22	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/16/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/16/22	(S)	Heard & Held
03/16/22	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/18/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/18/22	(S)	Heard & Held
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03/23/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/23/22	(S)	Heard & Held
03/23/22	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/30/22	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

LON GARRISON, Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Stated support for SB 236 on behalf of AASB.

ELWIN BLACKWELL, School Finance Manager
School Finance and Facilities Section
Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 236.

ANDREW LEAVITT, Director of Budget & Finance
Lower Kuskokwim School District
Mountain Village, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 236.

ED KING, Staff
Senator Roger Holland

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sectional analysis for SB 225.

DR. LISA PARADY, Executive Director
Alaska Council of School Administrators
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 225.

LON GARRISON, Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 225.

TOM KLAAMEYER, President
National Education Association Alaska
Eagle River, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 225.

KAREN DEMOSS, Executive Director
Prepared to Teach
New York, New York

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation SB 225.

ROZLYN GRADY-WYCHE, Vice President and Founder
Alaska Coalition of Black, Indigenous, and
People of Color Educators
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 225.

SONDRA MEREDITH, Teacher Certification Administrator
Innovation and Education Excellence
Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 225.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[9:02:21 AM](#)

CHAIR ROGER HOLLAND called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Hughes, Begich, Stevens and Chair Holland.

SB 236-FACILITIES CONSTITUTING A SCHOOL

[9:02:57 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 236 "An Act relating to facilities constituting a school."

He noted that this was the second hearing.

[CSSB 236, Version B, was before the committee.]

[9:03:10 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND opened public testimony SB 236.

[9:03:35 AM](#)

LON GARRISON, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), Juneau, Alaska, stated that AASB views charter schools as an option in public education to help ensure that every student in every district is able to receive the education that best fits their needs. It can be a challenge to have a charter school in many rural districts and smaller communities because of limited facilities, but SB 236 does not prevent a district that has just one school from also having a charter school if individuals in the community believe that is the best way to address the educational needs in their community. On behalf of the Association of Alaska School Boards, he stated support for passing SB 236.

[9:05:06 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND discerned that nobody else wished to comment and closed public testimony on SB 236.

[9:05:49 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS noted that the fiscal note indicates that this legislation was to resolve a problem in Hooper Bay. He asked if it was realistic for the state to spend \$1 million to resolve one problem.

CHAIR HOLLAND asked Elwin Blackwell if he had a response to the question.

[9:06:41 AM](#)

ELWIN BLACKWELL, School Finance Manager, School Finance and Facilities Section, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), Juneau, Alaska, stated that the bill will allow the Lower Yukon School District to receive two adjustments for their K-12 program in Hooper Bay. The current situation is that the charter school has two facilities so there is one adjustment for K-12 and one adjustment for the charter school. The bill addresses that situation and will allow two adjustments for the K-12 program and one adjustment for the charter school.

SENATOR STEVENS asked whether other schools might be affected if SB 236 were to pass, and whether the fiscal note addressed the actual cost.

[9:08:06 AM](#)

MR. BLACKWELL answered that SB 236 currently would only affect the school in Hooper Bay. No other communities with a single K-12 facility are even close to the 425 student ADM. For example, a community with 300 ADM that opened a charter school would continue to receive two adjustments because they are under the 425 student ADM threshold for the community.

[9:08:37 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked if he believed that the fiscal note was a legitimate reflection of the cost to the state.

MR. BLACKWELL said yes.

[9:08:54 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES offered her understanding that the fiscal note brought the funding back to the level it was before the charter school was formed. The total number of students in Hooper Bay did not change and there was still just one regular school, but some students transferred to the charter school when it was formed. She suggested Mr. Leavitt could confirm that.

[9:10:04 AM](#)

ANDREW LEAVITT, Director of Budget & Finance, Lower Kuskokwim School District, Anchorage, Alaska, explained that opening the charter school in Hooper Bay generated a \$1 million funding formula penalty for the school. SB 236 only affects Hooper Bay because it is the only community with an average daily membership (ADM) count of greater than 424 and only one school facility. He highlighted that the fiscal note reflects returning the funding for Hooper Bay to the level it was before the charter school was formed.

[9:11:08 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND found no further questions or comments and solicited a motion.

[9:11:25 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved to report the CS for SB 236, work order 32-LS1642\B, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[9:11:42 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND found no objection and CSSB 236(EDC) was reported from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[9:11:48 AM](#)

At ease.

SB 225-TEACHER REGISTERED APPRENTICE PROGRAMS

[9:13:33 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 225 "An Act relating to a paraprofessional training program; creating a teacher resident certificate; creating a teacher residency program; relating to requirements to issue a teacher certificate; relating to subject-matter expert limited teacher certificates; relating to limited teacher certificates; creating a teacher registered apprenticeship program; and creating a teacher registered apprenticeship program fund."

CHAIR HOLLAND noted that this was the seventh hearing and there was a committee substitute (CS) for the committee to consider. He solicited a motion.

[9:13:59 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for SB 225, work order 32-LS1439\I, as the working document.

[9:14:11 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND objected for purposes of discussion, and asked Mr. King to explain the changes between Version B and Version I.

[9:14:20 AM](#)

ED KING, Staff, Senator Roger Holland, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the summary of changes from Version B to Version I for SB 225, speaking to the prepared document that read as follows:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Senate Bill 225
TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Summary of Changes
Version B to Version I

Section 1: Adds a requirement for DEED to collaborate with the University when creating high school to teacher apprenticeship pathway.
(Page 4, line 5)

Section 2: Clarifies portions of the Teacher Residency program, including:

1. Limit a resident teacher from being a teacher of record during their first residency year
2. Set standards for mentorship
3. Make clear that districts are program sponsors

Section 3: No changes

Section 4: Inserts a requirement that nontraditional or alternative teacher preparation program must be accredited institutions

Section 5: No changes

Section 6: No changes

Section 7: No changes

Section 8: Provides a clearer description of the Teacher Apprenticeship Program by:

1. Directing DEED to be the lead agency in developing a statewide template standard of apprenticeship with the Federal Office of Apprenticeship.
2. Expands the pool of eligible participants to include people teaching with a limited certificate or with an expired provisional certificate.
3. Clarifies that the Teacher Apprenticeship Program is a multi-year pathway for someone without a college degree to "earn while they learn" as they complete on-the-job training, work experience, and coursework that results in a full teacher certificate.
4. Requires DEED and DOLW&D to help districts develop apprenticeship programs and secure funding.

5. Expands the apprenticeship grant fund to be a general teacher recruitment grant fund, including many innovative options for districts to address teacher shortages and promote those ideas throughout the state.

Section 9: Conforming changes

Section 10: Adds the repeal of AS 14.20.220, which is a limitation on years of service credit for out of state teachers. Also repeals AS 14.16.050(a)(3)(C), which is a direct reference to AS 14.20.220.

SENATOR HUGHES requested a copy of the summary of changes document.

[9:19:01 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND removed his objection; he found no further objection and CSSB 225, Version I, was adopted.

CHAIR HOLLAND turned to invited testimony.

[9:20:01 AM](#)

DR. LISA PARADY, Executive Director, Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA), Juneau, Alaska, provided testimony on SB 225 by invitation. She paraphrased the following prepared script:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Established in 1973, the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) is a private, nonprofit organization that was created to serve as an umbrella for Alaska's premier educational leadership organizations including the:

Alaska Superintendents Association, the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals, the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals, the Alaska School Business Officials, and all the hard-working school administrators across Alaska

First let me thank each of you for speaking to our members during their legislative fly-in this week and for meeting in individual meetings with them. I know you heard how critical the issues are that you are

addressing in SB225. It has been two years since our members have been here and you have helped make it an excellent learning and advocacy experience. Thank you.

Thank you for supporting the Alaska's Heart through Student Art show by attending and supporting student art.

Thank you also for inviting me to speak in support of Senate Bill 225.

ACSA's unifying purpose is to support education leaders in the state by providing a collective voice that champions possibilities for all students and purposeful advocacy for public education.

By now you understand ACSA's members work together each year to develop Joint Position Statements, which envelop the highest priorities for education policy positions. Preparing, Attracting, and Retaining Qualified Educators is one of our members' top priorities.

Retaining effective educators and leaders is imperative to increase student achievement and eliminate academic disparity for all of Alaska's students. ACSA strongly encourages the development of comprehensive statewide programs to prepare, attract, and retain high-quality, diverse educators and professionals. SB225 supports this position.

ACSA has worked with partners to create cohort new to career programs for principals, assistant principals and superintendents, aspiring superintendents, district office administrators to help grow and ultimately retain administrators. These programs focus on mentorship, networking, professional development, and the skills necessary to be an effective administrator. We know how important continuity in school districts is to the success of our students.

[9:23:16 AM](#)

Superintendent and principal turnover can negatively affect student, teacher, and school outcomes by disrupting a school's organizational climate and culture and the structures that facilitate teachers' work, all of which are essential for improved

instructional processes and student achievement. By way of example, Stanford University study found that the odds of teacher turnover were 10% higher in the year after a principal departed and that principal turnover was linked to increased chances of the most effective teachers leaving the school.

The Alaska School Leadership Academy (ASLA) is a partnership with DEED that serves new principals and provides them with experienced mentors. The program began in 2018, and we are on our fourth cohort of principals. The program has served 103 new principals in 65% of school districts and 85 schools across the state.

[9:24:47 AM](#)

DR. PARADAY continued to testify.

There are three pillars to ASLA. Personalized mentoring, giving new principals a veteran principal, they can have conversations with about their job and feel comfortable asking questions.

Being in a 2-year cohort, the new principals also have a network of peers with whom they can share experiences and grow together.

The third pillar is advancement of leadership skills. ASLA offers professional development critical to school leadership, so new principals can gain and strengthen skills that they will need to lead their schools.

What we know is that Leadership matters - it is a primary issue for retention if there is poor leadership

ACSA and the Alaska Superintendents Association also offer a similar program for new superintendents and superintendents new to the state. The new and incoming superintendent program was created to address the turnover rates at the position and provide on-the-job learning opportunities to first and second-year superintendents that are relevant to Alaska Schools. Superintendents are paired with mentors who have experience as superintendents in Alaska

[9:25:05 AM](#)

DR. PARADY continued to testify.

To address this issue ASA provides 3 distinct programs:

New Superintendent program - focus on board relations/collaboration, strengthening a supportive workplace for all staff, development of leadership attributes that make a difference in student achievement and school/district culture, problem solving and accountability implementation to ensure positive results for students - this program also provides mentors for new superintendents to support them to be successful and stay in their position for long-term district stability

District Leaders program - similar focus as the new superintendent program, but with more work on performance management through a continuous improvement process. District leaders are tasked with implementing the district vision as determined by the local communities and school board. Many tasks are the nuts and bolts of supporting school staff with improving learning for individual students and providing resources to put schools and their staff in a position to be successful. This heavily contributes to staff retention by providing a supportive workplace that is collaborative, accountable and supports all staff to develop their leadership skills for in-district opportunities.

Aspiring Superintendent program - focus on what it takes to be a successful school district superintendent and develop critical leadership skills that are demonstrated by successful superintendents and CEOs to lead improved student learning in a highly complex environment. In essence, ASA is working to build the "high quality bench" of prospective leaders to take on the role of superintendent in an Alaska school district. As with all education positions in Alaska, there are fewer applicants for the superintendent position than ever before. It is critical to give communities choices as well as provide support to Alaska's educators to improve their leadership skills that would allow them to move into different roles in public education.

[9:28:25 AM](#)

DR. PARADY continued to testify.

It is important to note that the superintendent position is considered a "terminal" job - that it is usually held by someone who has many years of experience in education and/or leadership roles. This capstone position is susceptible to shorter tenures than other education positions as many are near retirement age when they take on the role. For example, in 2021-22 there were 15 superintendent hires made to start the year. Of those open positions 8 were created due to retirement. Also, 4 of those open positions were created by the sitting superintendent moving to another open position. Of the 3 remaining openings 2 were filled by interim superintendents, which automatically created an opening for 2022-23 and 1 open position was created due to the sitting superintendent's untimely passing. Turnover will happen simply due to the experience level of a sitting superintendent. I will add that the impossible challenges that the COVID pandemic presented to education has been a compelling reason for many to retire.

New trends - Many of the hires from 2021-22 were considered new to the position (9 hires had no prior superintendent experience). Of the 9 new to position superintendents this year, all participated in the ASA New superintendent program, and all opted to participate in the mentoring support part of the program. Currently, all are returning to their position next year. There are a very few who are pursuing other superintendent positions in Alaska but have been successful in their current position with their boards wanting them to return.

We have found that when a superintendent participates in the ASA new superintendent program with the mentoring component, they are much more likely to return for their second year in the same position and very likely to return for a 3rd year. We have implemented the mentoring component for 3 years now and we see our results as very promising.

[9:30:48 AM](#)

DR. PARADY continued to testify.

2019-20: 12 new to position superintendents - 11 chose to participate in mentoring project in year 1, 9 chose to continue mentoring in year 2 and 7 are in their 3rd year in their original district - we saw 3 resignations from the group and 2 retirements

2020-21: 6 new to position superintendents - 5 chose to participate in the mentoring project in year 1, 4 chose to continue mentoring in year 2 and we will have 3 continue into their 3rd year in their original district. We saw 3 resignations from this group during their time in the cohort.

ACSA further recommends funding for a robust educator pipeline by creating incentives for graduates to stay in Alaska.

A nationally competitive compensation and benefits package, combined with an attractive state retirement system, is imperative for attracting and retaining effective educators and leaders. (JPS)

The Institute of Social and Economic Research found that Alaska averages around 1,000 new teacher hires a year. The same report found that each school district spends a minimum of \$20,000 per teacher hired, around \$20 million annually—the cost of training new teachers and recruitment. By investing in our state’s educators through competitive benefits packages, the money spent yearly on new hires can be invested in other needs within districts.

Results from the Governor’s Teacher Retention and Recruitment Working Group April 2021 report showed that current teachers ranked retirement benefits 4th out of 40 on their Items of Personal Importance. Current administrators ranked those benefits 1st.

Our education leaders in Alaska deserve compensation and benefits that reflect their job responsibilities and high level of education. By offering competitive pension plans to our educators, the state will show its commitment to the education of Alaska’s students.

[9:31:57 AM](#)

DR. PARADAY continued to testify.

In close, we thank you for bringing SB225 forward. We support the amendments that are being proposed to the new CS.

We hope there will be an amendment to afford private organizations, like ours to be able to apply for grants to have support to enhance the work we are doing thereby enabling us to offer it to all new and early career administrators

We know through research by stabilizing school administrators, we help to reduce teacher turnover thereby supporting increased student achievement for our students.

Thank you for working to stabilize this critical area of public education.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to advance this bill.

Thank you.

[9:33:52 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND recognized Lon Garrison as the next invited testifier.

[9:34:04 AM](#)

LON GARRISON, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards, Juneau, Alaska, spoke to the following prepared testimony on SB 225:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on **Committee Substitute for SB225.**

The Association of Alaska School Boards is in support of CS SB225. AASB's membership has four resolutions that directly or indirectly support the elements of this legislation. These include:

- **4.1 SUPPORTS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT**
- **4.5 ADDRESSING THE TEACHER, SPECIALIST, AND ADMINISTRATOR SHORTAGE**
- **4.17 ADDRESSING THE PARAPROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE**
- **4.18 ESTABLISHING A NEW TEACHER INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR ALASKA**

School boards and superintendents across the state, whether rural or urban, face a common and daunting challenge, the ability to find and retain teachers. For most districts, the teachers entering the educational workforce are young, inexperienced, and have little or no Alaska experience. In nearly all school districts, the teaching staff is not reflective of the cultural and ethnic makeup of the student population. As a result, teacher turnover has averaged about 22% or greater per year, or on average for each district, nearly 1 in 4 teachers will be new each year.

Teacher turnover has a direct impact on student achievement and the overall health and well-being of each student. This means that progress in improving student outcomes is negatively affected by the fact that students don't have the opportunity to experience stable lasting relationships with their educators.

SB 225 provides the opportunity to create alternate pathways for local individuals or content experts to become effective, reliable, and relevant educators that are much more likely to choose to stay in a teaching position. This ultimately creates an improved sense of connectedness and support for each student resulting in better outcomes.

[9:36:28 AM](#)

MR. GARRISON continued to testify.

AASB continually hears many school boards' desires to create alternate ways to allow classified staff to enter a teaching program while staying in their home district and continuing to work. The proposed paraprofessional training program or an apprenticeship can provide those opportunities. Furthermore, subject matter limited certificates can open a world of possibilities for all sorts of experts with real-life experience to engage and compel students to learn from those individuals.

By statute, school boards are responsible for allocating resources (a budget) on a local level in order to provide an excellent education for every student every day. Utilizing those funds to support locally grown teachers is far more cost-effective than

hiring nearly 25% of your workforce each year. School boards know that student outcomes are what matter and that one of the most significant ways to improve student achievement is to support the creation of a workforce that is reflective of the student population, is committed to the school and community, and brings something relevant and engaging to the classroom.

For these reasons, AASB strongly supports and urges the passage of Committee Substitute 225 as one more tool in the toolbox for addressing Alaska's teacher shortage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

CHAIR HOLLAND recognized Tom Klaameyer as the next invited testifier.

[9:38:21 AM](#)

TOM KLAAMEYER, President, National Education Association Alaska, Eagle River, Alaska, summarized his prepared testimony on SB 225. The full testimony read as follows:

[Original punctuation provided.]

With over 11,000 members, our organization represents teachers and education support professionals in hundreds of diverse schools across Alaska. As president, I have the opportunity to hear directly from our members about the real and devastating consequences our recruitment and retention crisis is having on our system of public education.

Alaska's educator shortage has been growing for a long time due to a variety of systemic issues. While the number of educators working in our public schools has been declining for years, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already compounding impacts of years of flat funding, and the worst retirement system for teachers in the entire country. In every district in Alaska, educators are planning to leave their jobs, and in many cases, the state, at the end of this school year.

[9:39:00 AM](#)

MR. KLAAMEYER continued to testify.

The educators who choose to remain are enduring unprecedented levels of stress and pressure associated with added duties, growing class sizes, and lack of support. Tragically, it's our students who suffer when educators do not have the time or resources to dedicate to their work.

Just so you know, my testimony has three basic parts, a discussion of the great possibilities and opportunities provided by this bill to address some of our teacher recruitment and retention problems. Secondly, I'll share some concerns we have about provisions within the bill. And lastly - while we believe that SB 225 has started an important conversation, the bill in its current form fails to address the systemic changes necessary to result in a thriving working and learning environment for our educators and students. Without identifying and addressing the real and underlying challenges we face, we will be unable to truly address our teacher workforce issues.

We support and appreciate the inclusion of a paid residency as a key feature of this bill. We would want to make sure that the final product includes the characteristics of a strong and successful program, which aren't necessarily outlined in the bill. This includes:

[9:39:50 AM](#)

- Strong district and University partnerships. We worry about programs which would bypass university partnerships, thus denying their residents access to this high-quality professional development, pedagogical training, and resources which are necessary to become the best educators possible for students. We are very pleased to see the University of Alaska added back into the conversation.
- A full year of residency teaching alongside, not in lieu, of an expert mentor teacher who co-teaches with residents - while also completing highly integrated coursework. We all know how difficult teaching is, especially the first year. We would not be setting up our residents, or their students, for success if we didn't make sure that they had properly supervised clinical practice with sufficient formal observations

and feedback. - This cannot happen if the resident is made to be the teacher of record left in isolation in their own classroom during the critical year of their pedagogical development.

- Strong financial support for residents, like the paid residency, and perhaps coupled with other measures such as tuition assistance or a student loan forgiveness program, in exchange for a three-to-five-year post-residency teaching commitment (perhaps in high-needs schools). To make this most successful in reducing teacher turnover rates, NEA-Alaska would suggest the creation of a comprehensive program to provide ongoing mentoring, professional development, and a system of support for these early career educators beyond just their residency. To be most effective, these funded induction programs should provide experienced mentors in the same field, have common planning time with other teachers in the grade or subject area, regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers, and also be a part of an external network of teachers. (Incidentally, I am confident that the Alaska Commons (already being developed by DEED on Canvas), could be built out to be the ideal platform to facilitate this network.)

[9:41:15 AM](#)

MR. KLAAMEYER continued to testify.

We also support creating pathways for paraeducators to achieve full certification. Paraeducators already working in our schools are more likely to stay in their communities for their entire careers and this workforce is often more reflective of the diversity of our student population. We are also generally supportive of the teacher pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs as well-intended policy proposals which may help us "grow our own" education workforce - however, the devil is in the details. We are interested to learn more specifics about what these programs would look like in practice and how much of an impact it may have on our overall recruitment strategy. Our biggest concern is that it will not do enough to combat the overall challenges we're facing.

Thirdly, we support similarly robust mentoring and leadership training opportunities for school

administrators. According to a report by the Learning Policy Institute, the key factors associated with educator turnover are compensation, teacher preparation and support, and school leadership. In my experience as a teacher I'll tell you that I've never seen my colleagues leave because of the kids, but rather they do often leave because of adults. Alaska absolutely has to work to create systems and resources for developing leadership pipelines within districts and expanding its leadership capacity in schools to build and nurture the collegial, collaborative, respectful school settings that encourage teacher retention.

Might I also add that I'm glad to hear about the provision being added to study teachers housing as a recruitment and retention problem for our rural schools.

[9:42:06 AM](#)

MR. KLAAMEYER continued to testify.

Now, I would like to highlight some of the policy changes that we find concerning.

First, in Section 2, on page 4 lines 26-29, there is a MAJOR policy shift to start recognizing NATIONALLY accredited institutions of higher learning. It is our understanding that regional accreditation has been the gold standard for accreditation of institutions of higher learning.

According to Edsmart.org *"regional accrediting organizations operate in specific regions of the country. These organizations grant accreditation to schools, colleges, and universities showing that their credits and degrees meet minimum standards. Regionally accredited colleges are mostly academically oriented, non-profit, or state-owned institutions... on the other hand, Nationally accredited schools are generally for-profit and offer vocational, career, or technical programs."* This is a major shift in policy, that could allow a future School Board or Commissioner to approve substandard teacher education programs. I appreciate Mr. King's comment that an amendment is coming on this and look forward to seeing the new language.

[9:42:18 AM](#)

MR. KLAAMEYER continued to testify.

Next, I just want to flag for the Committee Section 4, lines 24 through 36. This section will potentially allow someone who simply passes a test to qualify for a subject matter expert certificate. Currently, one must have majored or minored or have 5 years of experience in the subject of instruction. Section 4, subsection C allows for one to pass a test to prove or demonstrate knowledge or competency. This is a departure from how we currently do things.

We're not necessarily opposed to this, but it is a major shift in policy and could affect the quality of educators in our classrooms for the simple reason that just because one knows a great deal about a subject does not mean they can effectively teach that subject.

[9:42:36 AM](#)

Our MAJOR concern is regarding ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO CERTIFICATION.

First, in Section 2, page 2, lines 24-25 and also in Section 4, on page 8, lines 9 and 10 we have concerns about the potential unintended consequences of establishing undefined alternative pathways to a teaching certificate.

We know that this is not the intention of the legislation or the committee, and in no way are we suggesting that future commissioners or State Boards of Education will not be judicious in their approval of alternative pathways, but in the rush to get more educators certificated, we want to flag a concern about the quality of some of the alternative pathways that have been established in other jurisdictions.

In other states, Texas in particular, there are programs that essentially amount to a teaching "degree mill" where one can pay a fee and be enrolled in an "alternative pathway" to a teaching certificate without any kind of meaningful residency requirements or experience working with students. These programs vary in length, from three months to two years.

[9:43:11 AM](#)

MR. KLAAMEYER continued to testify.

Most notably, research shows that teachers who are prepared through these programs on average have less coursework, less student teaching experience and are not more likely to be retained. Teachers obtaining their credentials from an alternate pathway are fully 25% more likely to leave their school or profession - so, this can become a viscous cycle, essentially making investments in unprepared educators, who are less likely to stay in the profession, and running the very real risk of students potentially losing days, weeks, or even months of ground academically as a result.

The National Council of State Legislatures recommends - at the very least - establishing standards for program review and an approval process. These kinds of programs do not ensure the level of teacher quality that Alaska students deserve. And, by not being more specific and clear in the statute, we worry that Alaska could be on the same path that other states have followed in continuing to adopt additional certification options which lack rigor and may be driven by profit rather than quality.

[9:43:50 AM](#)

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't speak about the underlying problem with this exercise before us today. While we thank Senator Holland and the Education Committee for highlighting the discussion around the attraction and retention of educators and proposing real solutions in SB225, I am compelled to address its underlying flaw - the fact that it does not acknowledge the far larger issues of funding, compensation, and a meaningful retirement benefit for our dedicated public education employees.

- The extent to which individuals choose to enter and stay in the education professions is highly influenced by the availability of competitive wages and benefits. The results of the survey by the Governor's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force, one of the largest of its kind performed in the state of Alaska, confirm that these are the most important factors teachers consider in deciding where to work and for how long. And while some are reluctant to properly address these fundamental needs, the creation of alternate certification pathways and residency

programs alone, simply are not going to fix the problem. If it's going to succeed in fulfilling its intent, SB225 can only be one small part of a much more comprehensive approach.

In addition to solutions like SB 225, the legislature must pass legislation to provide a stable, predictable, and growing funding structure to truly invest in Alaska's students.

- This includes increasing the base student allocation and protecting it against the ravages of inflation. Districts must be able to offer competitive wages and benefits and hire enough teachers and support staff to fully support our students' needs. Research shows (and, quite frankly, common sense dictates) that teachers' salaries affect the supply of teachers, the distribution of teachers across districts, and the quality of people training to become teachers. To ignore this fundamental reality and failing to fix it is to render all of the other work we're doing to improve the issue nearly moot.

[9:44:10 AM](#)

MR. KLAAMEYER continued to testify.

We absolutely must provide a decent, stable, reasonable retirement for our employees, such as that which is outlined in HB 220. If we are to truly address the problem of teacher retention, fixing the worst teacher retirement system in the nation has to be priority number one. We can do it without costing the state any more money than what is being paid right now. If we only pass SB225 to build this robust training and development system for educators, but ignore our retirement crisis, all we will have done is created an ideal teacher prep program for other states. The best and most effective way to retain our teachers over the long run is to provide a retirement that incentivizes staying in the state, not leaving it.

[9:44:57 AM](#)

MR. KLAAMEYER continued to testify.

Forward funding our system of public education is one of the most effective and efficient tools available to the legislature. By providing school districts with a

clear understanding of their funding levels a year in advance, they can forego the stressful and wholly unnecessary process of laying off educators every spring and then attempting to rehire them after the budget is enacted. If the other issues I've mentioned aren't enough of an incentive to leave Alaska, being laid off at the end of a long and challenging school year is certainly the final straw for many early career educators weighing their employment options.

If we are truly serious in our intent to address the educator turnover crisis, both fully and forward funding our schools will allow us to do the many other things our children deserve. We would be able to focus on pre-kindergarten, culturally responsive instruction, provide the mental, social and emotional supports students need, as well as the additional direct assistance to students who struggle to read at grade level. We could get back to inspiring students to explore their creativity and channel those passions into career fields or higher learning opportunities. Perhaps most importantly, we can stop spending our time advocating for basic needs and return to preparing the children of Alaska to become well-rounded and productive members of our society.

We simply cannot address the educator shortage until we strengthen the profession and focus our investment in public education on strategic priorities.

I would like to thank the Committee for their time and consideration, and I am available to answer any questions that you might have.

[9:45:54 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked Mr. Klaameyer if he had any data to support the notion that unprepared teachers are more likely to leave.

MR. KLAAMEYER answered that he would follow up with the information.

CHAIR HOLLAND recognized Karen DeMoss as the next invited testifier.

[9:46:26 AM](#)

KAREN DEMOSS, Executive Director, Prepared to Teach, New York, New York, provided the following prepared testimony on SB 225:

Prepared to Teach is a nationwide initiative out of Bank Street College of Education in New York. Bank Street was founded over a century ago as an experimental school that embedded a teacher preparation program. The goals were to understand how children and youth learn, to understand how to help adults learn how to help children and youth learn, and then finally to share out lessons in an effort to improve outcomes for family schools and communities nationwide.

Over the years, Bank Street has brought its work to bear in many areas, helping establish Head Start, Universal Pre-K, word processing in schools, and multicultural representation in children's books. Our project fits in this tradition. For the past six years, we've worked with districts, preparation programs, states, and the federal government to explore how to create a teacher preparation system that allows every aspiring teacher to learn alongside an accomplished mentor, co-teaching in a classroom for a year before being certified.

This is the approach elite private schools have always had, and it is how countries that have strong educational systems do preparation, as the National Council of State Legislatures has documented in their ground-breaking report, "No Time to Lose."

9:47:51 AM

The reason I called this legislation historic is that this bill will position Alaska among the country's first states to act on what we now know. Teacher residencies are the best way to prepare for the profession of teaching, but scaling teacher residencies requires investments because aspiring teachers cannot afford to work for free.

With a move towards more universal access to year-long, financially supported teacher preparation, here's some of the kinds of impacts the state of Alaska can look forward to that funded residencies have documented:

- 90 percent retention in the third year of teaching, at the same school;
- Over 80 percent retention in the same district after five years;
- Doubling of teachers who come from diverse backgrounds;
- Improvement in achievement in classrooms where residents are prepared;
- Reduction in disciplinary referrals in classrooms where residents are prepared.
- Strong leadership roles for mid-career and veteran teachers; and
- Improved instructional outcomes in first year teachers classes where achievement is the most difficult to realize.

[9:48:55 AM](#)

MS. DEMOSS continued to testify.

The research based outcomes of residencies are all positive, and they translate into even more powerful lived experiences in schools. When teachers understand how to create safe, supportive and engaging climates, children build a sense of belonging in the world. When instruction is grounded in pedagogies that challenge and encourage creativity, young minds flourish and develop identities with a sense of curiosity and possibility.

When schools understand and respect their communities, parents are partners to their children's educators. Reinforcing minds sets expectations that help children thrive. The science of learning and development research makes clear that every student needs teachers who can do these things. And learning how to manage the complexities of classrooms, how the strengths of all the individual learners, and how to design supports for them all takes time. Residencies provide the necessary time for individuals to become those teachers that we want inside our schools.

[9:49:52 AM](#)

MS. DEMOSS continued to testify.

For the entire nation, every day that we delay shifting our teachers' preparation systems to funded

residencies, sets us further behind. More students have remedial needs because they haven't been given appropriate opportunities to learn. Many disengage and drop out. Others may be inappropriately referred to special education, with profound implications both for educational systems and for the students and families themselves.

The good news is that we now know how to build the right preparation ecosystems grounded in deep partnerships between P-12 and institutions of higher education. And the University of Alaska system is poised to engage that work, we know, as the Fairbanks campus has joined our national network of partnerships and is actively engaged with leaders of other campuses. Alaska stands ready to show the way for the nation.

As the old proverb says, the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago and the second best time is today. Today you are considering this ground-breaking legislation that will offer a pathway to make what is possible a reality.

I commend you for your vision around teacher residencies. I hope the bill garners broad, bipartisan, cross-sector support. As your discussions move forward, our project has reams of reports and lots of expertise in financial modeling for sustainability and supportive partnership for this kind of systemic change, and the research base that supports it all. If any of this will help your efforts, please know that we stand ready to support you.

Thank you very much for your time.

[9:51:18 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND recognized Rozlyn Grady-Wyche as the next invited testifier.

[9:51:35 AM](#)

ROZLYN GRADY-WYCHE, Vice President and Founder, Alaska Coalition of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Educators, Anchorage, Alaska, stated that BIPOC supports SB 225 and is currently working on the ways to bring more educators of color into the field of education and showing kids that it's "cool" to

be an educator. SB 225 will help this effort. She recounted her work experience starting as the cafeteria manager for the Anchorage School District where she engaged with children who experienced behavioral issues and now as a para professional. Throughout this time she gave students a different face to look at. She currently is taking classes online from the accredited Grand Canyon University, and paying for it out of pocket. She is in the final year of a dual degree elementary education/special education program and will be a certified teacher in 2023. As a single parent of five, her goal is to eventually obtain a doctorate in African American or cultural studies. A short-term goal is to become a superintendent with the Anchorage School District.

MS. GRADY-WYCHE said she would be the perfect candidate for SB 225 and that there were many more people just like herself. A number of parents she knows who are currently in school could have used a residency program and want a professional mentor. SB 225 will make the difference in the quality and quantity of educators. She also highlighted the importance of retirement benefits for educators.

[9:55:14 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND opened public testimony on SB 225; he found none and closed public testimony.

[9:55:40 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND moved to adopt Amendment 1, work order 32-LS1439\I.1.

32-LS1439I.1
Marx
3/29/22

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

BY SENATOR HOLLAND

TO: CSSB 225(EDC), Draft Version "I"

Page 11, line 1:

Delete "administrator development"

Insert "professional development for superintendents, principals, and other school administrators"

SENATOR HUGHES objected for purposes of discussion.

CHAIR HOLLAND explained that Amendment 1 clarifies the meaning of "administrator development."

[9:56:09 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES removed her objection.

[9:56:14 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND found no further objection, and Amendment 1 was adopted.

[9:56:22 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND moved to adopt Amendment 2, work order 32-LS1439\I.2.

32-LS1439I.2

Marx

3/29/22

AMENDMENT 2

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

BY SENATOR HOLLAND

TO: CSSB 225(EDC), Draft Version "I"

Page 11, following line 28:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* Sec. 11. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

REPORT ON STUDY OF TEACHER HOUSING NEEDS. The Department of Education and Early Development shall conduct a study that assesses the needs for teacher housing in rural areas of the state. The study must include a projection of future teacher housing needs in rural areas of the state, a plan to meet those needs, and identification of the annual appropriations required to satisfy the identified needs. The Department of Education and Early Development shall collaborate with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to determine the projection of future teacher housing needs as part of the study. The Department of Education and Early Development shall collaborate with the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation and school districts in the state to develop the plan to meet the needs for teacher housing

identified in the study. Not later than December 31, 2023, the Department of Education and Early Development shall submit a report on the study to the senate secretary and chief clerk of the house of representatives and notify the legislature that the report is available."

[9:56:28 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES objected for purposes of discussion.

CHAIR HOLLAND explained that Amendment 2 adds a section on teacher housing, which was discussed in the previous hearing.

[9:56:40 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES removed her objection.

[9:56:44 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND found no further objection, and Amendment 2 was adopted.

[9:56:55 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND moved to adopt Amendment 3, work order 32-LS1439\I.3.

32-LS1439\I.3

Marx
3/29/22

AMENDMENT 3

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

BY SENATOR HOLLAND

TO: CSSB 225(EDC), Draft Version "I"

Page 7, following line 13:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* **Sec. 4.** AS 14.20.020(i) is amended to read:

(i) Beginning on July 1, 1998, a person is not eligible for an initial regular teacher certificate unless the person has taken and successfully completed a competency examination or examinations designated, at the time the person took the test, by the board, or the person has demonstrated competency through an alternative method under this subsection. The board shall review nationally recognized examinations that are designed to test the competency of new teachers

and shall designate those examinations that it finds adequately test the skills and abilities of new teachers. For each examination designated under this subsection, the board shall establish the minimum acceptable level of performance. The board may establish an alternative method to test the competency, skills, and abilities of new teachers who have taken but have not successfully completed the competency examination or examinations designated by the board under this subsection."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

[9:57:04 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES objected for purposes of discussion.

CHAIR HOLLAND explained that Amendment 3 gives the State Board of Education flexibility to approve alternative ways for teachers to demonstrate competency. This specifically targets people who have the necessary skills but are unable to pass the competency examination for certification due to test anxiety or because English is a second language. There is no intent to reduce the standard of competency; it is an alternative means to demonstrate the same skills.

[9:57:56 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES removed her objection.

[9:58:02 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND found no further objection, and Amendment 3 was adopted.

[9:58:10 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND moved Amendment 4, work order 32-LS1439\I.6.

32-LS1439\I.6

Marx

3/29/22

AMENDMENT 4

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

BY SENATOR HOLLAND

TO: CSSB 225(EDC), Draft Version "I"

Page 4, line 25:

Delete "at a nationally or regionally accredited institution"

Page 5, following line 19:

Insert a new subsection to read:

"(e) The board shall establish standards for the approval of nontraditional and alternative teacher education programs described in (b)(1)(A)(ii) of this section. The standards must be comparable to the standards for approving institutions of higher education under AS 14.20.020(b)."

Page 8, line 10:

Delete "at a nationally or regionally accredited institution"

Page 8, following line 23:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* **Sec. 7.** AS 14.20.022 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(i) The board shall establish standards for the approval of nontraditional and alternative teacher education programs described in (b)(3)(B) of this section. The standards must be comparable to the standards for approving institutions of higher education under AS 14.20.020(b)."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

[9:58:17 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES objected for purposes of discussion.

[9:58:20 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND explained that Amendment 4 seeks to clarify that SB 225 does not intend to degrade the quality of teachers. The standards for alternative teacher education programs must be comparable to the statutory standards for university programs.

[9:58:39 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES removed her objection.

[9:58:43 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND found no further objection, and Amendment 4 was adopted.

[9:58:49 AM](#)

At ease.

[10:00:42 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND reconvened the meeting and stated there were two conceptual amendments.

SENATOR HUGHES explained that the reason for the first conceptual amendment is that the new section about the teacher recruitment fund should be about recruiting and retaining new teachers. To that end, the term "and retention" is added to the title of the fund in Sec. 14.20.710 and throughout subsection (a).

[10:01:42 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES moved Conceptual Amendment 1.

CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT 1 TO SB 225

Page 10, line 15

Insert "and retention" following "recruitment" in the title of Sec. 14.20.710 and in subsection (a) following "recruitment"

Page 11, lines 6, 25, and 27

Insert "and retention" following "recruitment"

[10:02:10 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND objected for purposes of discussion and noted that the discussion already took place.

[10:02:22 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND removed his objection; he found no further objection and Conceptual Amendment 1 was adopted.

[10:02:34 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND moved Conceptual Amendment 2. He noted that Dr. Parady suggested the amendment.

CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT 2 to SB 225

Page 10, line 21

Insert "to non-profit organization and" following "grants"

[10:03:22 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND found no objection and Conceptual Amendment 2 was adopted.

SENATOR HUGHES referenced Amendment 2 and asked Sondra Meredith if it was realistic for DEED to meet the December 31, 2023 deadline to report to the legislature on the study of teacher housing needs.

[10:04:45 AM](#)

SONDRA MEREDITH, Teacher Certification Administrator, Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), Juneau, Alaska, answered that DEED would absolutely be able to complete a study and report to the legislature by that deadline.

CHAIR HOLLAND stated the committee authorizes Legislative Legal Services to make conforming and technical changes to the conceptual amendments.

CHAIR HOLLAND found no further amendments to SB 225.

[10:05:33 AM](#)

At ease.

[10:05:54 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND reconvened the meeting and noted that an amendment to allow districts to move to a four day schedule would be presented to the next committee of referral.

CHAIR HOLLAND solicited the will of the committee.

[10:06:24 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved to report CSSB 225, work order 32-LS1439\I, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and forthcoming fiscal note(s).

[10:06:41 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND found no objection and CSSB 225(EDC) was reported from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[10:07:01 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Holland adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 10:07 a.m.