

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
January 26, 2022
1:06 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Bishop called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Donny Olson
Senator Natasha von Imhof
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator David Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Senator Roger Holland, Sponsor; Senator Tom Begich, Sponsor; Ed King, Staff, Senator Roger Holland; Loki Tobin, Staff, Senator Begich.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Kymyona Burk, Policy Director, Foundation for Excellence in Education; Paul Barker, Principal, King Cove School, King Cove; Trevor Storrs, President and CEO, Alaska Children's Trust, Anchorage; Bob Griffin, Self, Anchorage.

SUMMARY

SB 111 EARLY EDUCATION; READING INTERVENTION

SB 111 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Bishop relayed that it was the committee's second hearing of SB 111. The intention of the committee was to hear invited testimony, hear public testimony, and then set the bill aside.

#sb111

SENATE BILL NO. 111

"An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to public schools; 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 assessing 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 school operating funds; relating to a virtual education consortium; and providing for an effective date."

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KYMYONA BURK, POLICY DIRECTOR, FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION (via teleconference) shared efforts in Mississippi, like SB 111, which had yielded positive results in that state. She noted that the appropriation to support the program in Mississippi was \$15 million annually. She discussed the various allocations of the appropriation. She said that the return on the investment had been significant; students had improved 10 skill set points since the passage of the legislation in 2013.

Ms. Burk discussed other returns on investment such as increased teacher knowledge and student engagement. She summarized that there had been an unprecedented amount of funding sent to states through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). She used the example of Tennessee, which had leveraged the funds to support early literacy and summer learning opportunities. She emphasized that the investment in literacy outcomes paid off large dividends in the future.

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Co-Chair Bishop recognized Senator Holland and Senator Begich in the gallery.

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Senator Wielechowski congratulated Dr. Burk on the achievement in Mississippi. He was curious about similarities between what was proposed in Alaska versus the bill in Mississippi.

Dr. Burk was familiar with the Alaskan legislation. She felt it was like what was passed in Mississippi. She believed that the bill provided a comprehensive and supportive approach to making significant change.

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Co-Chair Bishop asked whether Dr. Burk had any anecdotal stories from families that had students that had struggled with reading.

Dr. Burk shared that Mississippi law required for parents to be informed early on that their child was struggling with reading, which empowered parents to enter a partnership with educators. She discussed children's sense of accomplishments. She expounded on the various ways the law had served to make education more equitable. She said that parents were thankful that their children had access to high quality instructional materials, which were now required by law.

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Co-Chair Bishop OPENED public testimony.

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PAUL BARKER, PRINCIPAL, KING COVE SCHOOL, KING COVE (via teleconference), relayed that he was online as a representative and had no testimony.

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Co-Chair Stedman thought it seemed as though reading and mathematics scores in Alaska were decreasing over the last several years, pre-Covid-19.

Mr. Barker agreed with Co-Chair Stedman's observation. He stressed support for the bill and the importance of early intervention.

Co-Chair Stedman queried what the intervention should include.

Mr. Barker listed increased parent involvement, community involvement, and early identification of interventions.

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Senator von Imhof asked Mr. Barker to comment whether HeadStart preschool was available in his area. She asked about state programs and whether they were producing results.

Mr. Barker commented that the Aleutians East Borough School (AEBSD) District had a flourishing HeadStart and pre-school program.

Senator von Imhof asked whether there were enough resources to utilize additional funds for preschool if the bill were to be passed. She wondered how passage of the bill would affect HeadStart programs and whether there would be competition for resources.

Mr. Barker asked Senator von Imhof to repeat her question.

Senator von Imhof asked whether King Cove and other areas had room to accommodate additional preschool programs.

Mr. Barker could not comment on the question.

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Co-Chair Stedman was curious about what percentage of students attended preschool in AEBSD. He asked whether those that went to preschool scored better in reading and math in 4th grade than those who did not attend preschool.

Mr. Barker affirmed that he had seen an increase in students who attended preschool. Currently greater than 75

percent of the children in the community attended preschool.

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TREVOR STORRS, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ALASKA CHILDREN'S TRUST, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He noted that Alaska was ranked 49th out of 50 in education nationwide. He offered statistics to accompany the low ranking. He recognized that parents were the most important teacher for children and noted that often parents needed more tools to be successful. He listed the benefits of early childhood education. He expressed concern with the sunset date currently in the bill. He thought that requiring reports to audit programs would be more beneficial than a sunset date.

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BOB GRIFFIN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He shared that he was the chair of the State Board of Education Reading Committee. He mentioned that similar legislation had been introduced in 2014. He commented that Alaska was one of the only states without a comprehensive reading policy. He asserted that most of the components in SB 111 were modelled after programs in Mississippi, which had been modeled after successful programs in Florida. He cited positive statistics involving NAPE scores in Mississippi.

Mr. Griffith continued his remarks. He discussed statistics in Miami Dade County in Florida, where a comprehensive reading policy was proving successful across racial and socioeconomic lines.

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Co-Chair Stedman asked whether Mr. Griffin could give a rough idea of how many kids in the state went to preschool and if there were observable geographical differences in attendance numbers and reading scores.

Mr. Griffin thought the question might be better addressed by the Department of Education and Early Development commissioner. He noted that preschool was an important component but was not the most important aspect of the reading policy.

Co-Chair Stedman reiterated his curiosity surrounding the difference between the future performance of children who had access to preschool versus those who did not.

Co-Chair Bishop thought some questions would be answered in the Sectional Analysis.

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Senator Wielechowski asked if Mr. Griffin thought the legislature should consider putting Pre-K education in the Base Student Allocation (BSA).

Mr. Griffin thought the matter could be taken into consideration.

Co-Chair Bishop commented that the question could be considered by the bill sponsor.

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Senator von Imhof asked whether Mr. Griffin had noticed that Alaska's 4th grade math and reading NAPE scores for 2015 to 2019 showed a decline. She asserted that the spread between Alaska's scores and the national mean had widened. She asked about the reasoning. She was curious whether there had been a statewide analysis of the four-year trend in reading.

Mr. Griffin had noticed the same trends. He thought the lack of a state reading policy had hurt the students' scores in all categories. He stated that other states had had programs in place for decades. He asserted that children needed to learn to read so that they could read to learn. He lamented that if children did not catch up by 4th grade the statistics showed that they generally were behind in 8th grade.

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Senator von Imhof thought the bill had two parts: a comprehensive reading program and expansion of preschool. She pondered whether a reading program would be enough to boost test scores. She noted that preschool programs were already available in the state.

Mr. Griffin cited that all the states with the highest scores had universal voluntary pre-K. He suggested that HeadStart was not necessarily a substitution for a high-quality pre-school. He noted a study by DEED that showed that HeadStart programs did not prepare children for success in school.

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Co-Chair Bishop CLOSED public testimony.

Co-Chair Bishop noted that the committee would stop after each section for discussion.

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SENATOR ROGER HOLLAND, SPONSOR, introduced himself.

SENATOR TOM BEGICH, SPONSOR, stated that 11 percent of Alaskan children were currently receiving high quality pre-K. He said that \$3.2 million was distributed annually to those programs in the form of grants. The grants were part of a pilot project started 12 years ago. He said that all the evidence, locally and nationally, showed that high quality pre-K and comprehensive reading programs were necessary in tandem for overall success. He said the combination was evidence based in studies of measures taken across the state during the pilot project. He relayed that the children who had exposure to quality early childhood education, coupled with comprehensive reading plans, showed greater success than children without exposure to early education.

Senator Begich related that funding would be separated out between HeadStart and programs contained in the legislation so there would be no "double dipping" of resources. He stated that the state had no capacity to assure that HeadStart provided the quality and standards of the programs offered in the bill. He continued to discuss the differences between the bill and HeadStart.

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Senator Begich continued his remarks. He discussed the impetus for the bill. He asserted that \$1.2 million was spent yearly on education with no accountability. He emphasized that the bill provided accountability. He stated

that the bill was the product of the Senate Education Committee rather than being his personal bill. He admitted that he would have crafted a bill differently but asserted that the current legislation was critical for investing in Alaska's future. He reiterated the importance of combining early education with strong reading, local control, and the evidence of what works in Alaska.

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Senator Wilson asked whether the Childcare Assistance Program would currently pay for Pre-K education.

Senator Begich responded that he did not know.

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Senator von Imhof agreed that high-quality pre-school in conjunction with a high-quality reading program was the closest the state could get to "a magic bullet." She expressed curiosity that the \$1.3 million already appropriated for education had yielded little result. She recalled a comment from the previous day that the requested funding of \$12 million to \$20 million in the bill would make the \$1.3 million "work better." She thought it was hard to fathom that the \$1.3 billion spent on education was yielding falling scores. She questioned accountability for the money that was already being spent. She wondered how assurances could be given that the funding request in the bill would yield the promised results.

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Senator Begich reiterated that when Senator Holland and the Senate Education Committee had insisted upon greater accountability in the bill the department had embraced those measures. He said that evidence from pilot projects in rural areas of the state had show high performance and returns with strong support and commitment from the department. He spoke of neighboring districts that had different result due to the applied processes. He said that comprehensive things needed to be done to fix education in the state. He asserted that the legislation was the spark that could lead to an overall improvement in education in the state. He contended that there was data that showed the connection between quality early childhood programs and future academic success.

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Senator von Imhof mentioned Co-Chair Stedman's comment the previous day that the governor's ten-year plan showed deficit spending. She asked whether there was room in the governor's proposed budget to absorb the cost of the legislation.

Senator Begich noted that the committee set finance and budget priorities and reminded that the priorities showed values. He suggested that oil and gas credit payments could be reduced, or perhaps the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. He pointed out that three years ago the legislature decided to change the percent of market value (POMV) draw for the Education Trust, which increased the annual amount by \$10 million. He mentioned the education raffle, which had brought in \$500,000 annually for education. He felt that there was a moral obligation to use those additional funds for education. He added that in the process of budgeting, the legislature needed recognize that the number of students in the state had continued to fall, which meant that the foundation formula would decrease.

Senator Begich mentioned additional federal funds through ARPA and other sources that could help offset the cost to the state. He thought that the return on investment was obvious and urged the committee prioritize education by supporting the bill.

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Senator Holland mentioned Senator von Imhof's comments about declines in reading scores of 8th grade level. He asserted that declining performance in 4th grade was a precursor to low scores in 8th grade. He lamented that the legislature had little control over the funding appropriated for education on the Operating budget. He said that the bill attach accountability to those funds.

Co-Chair Bishop recognized Senator Shelley Hughes in the gallery.

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Senator von Imhof pointed out that in 2013, 8th grade math scores in the state were at the national average. She noted that the gaps in performance had widened in both reading

and math since 2013. She hoped a group could come together to look at education overall to identify trends and find holistic solutions for the entire system.

Senator Begich agreed. He said that the bill would codify reports that districts made that reflected gains. He stated that there were mechanisms in the bill that defined a group of people reporting back to the legislature and the department of the progress of the program.

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Co-Chair Stedman noted a \$57 million reduction in education since 2015, \$10.8 under the current administration. He asserted that there was no room in the revenue stream for any of the legislation put forth by the administration; the governor did not leave any fiscal room available for even his own policy changes. He thought that the department could respond to Senator von Imhof's question about what caused scores to begin falling in 2013. He wanted the response in aggregate and by school district.

Senator Begich relayed that the department had the information and would provide it to the committee.

Co-Chair Bishop informed that the department would be before the committee to discuss the failure rate.

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Co-Chair Stedman handed the gavel to Co-Chair Stedman.

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ED KING, STAFF, SENATOR ROGER HOLLAND, addressed a Sectional Analysis (copy on file):

Sec. 1 Establishes this Act as the Alaska Academic Improvement and Modernization (AIM) Act.

Sec. 2 AS 14.03.040, relating to day-in-session requirements, is amended to address a gap in the current law. The change makes clear that kindergarten and early education programs are not subject to the requirements. Section 20 clarifies that the state board of education should adopt regulations for those programs.

Sec. 3 AS 14.03.060(e), relating to the definition of an elementary school, is amended by:

- Changing the term "pre-elementary" to "early education" (defined in sections 14 and 17).
- Adding the term "approved by" to conform to the addition of AS 14.03.410(a)(2) (added by section 14).
- Making clearer the relationship between Head Start agencies and DEED.
- Removing the language regarding ADM count, as it is moved to AS 14.03.410(f) (within section 14) and AS 14.17.500 (section 25).

Sec. 4 AS 14.03.060(e), relating to the definition of an elementary school, is amended in 2034 to reverse the addition of "approved by" in section 2. This change is required to conform with the repeal of AS 14.03.410 (related to early education funding).

Sec. 5 Amends AS 14.03.072, related to providing information to K-3 parents, by changing the word "literacy" to "reading," inserting a requirement that the intervention strategies be culturally responsive, incorporating the reading intervention services added by section 35, and replacing "retention" with "progression."

Sec. 6 Removes the reference to reading intervention services after the repeal of AS 14.30.765 in 2034.

Co-Chair Stedman handed the gavel back to Co-Chair Bishop.

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LOKI TOBIN, STAFF, SENATOR BEGICH, read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 7 Amends AS 14.03.078(a), related to DEED reporting requirements, by:

- adding school districts as a recipient of the DEED's annual report.
- expanding the reporting requirement to incorporate all reports in AS 14.03.120, including those listed below.
- adding ratios of administrative employees to students, administrative employees to teachers, and teacher to student ratios to the annual report.

- adding a progress report of the reading intervention programs established by section 35.
- Adding a report on the effectiveness and participation of the parents-as-teachers program established by section 14.

Sec. 8 Repeals the reports on reading intervention and parents-as-teachers when the programs sunset in 2034.

Sec. 9 Adds two subsections to AS 14.03.078, relating to department reporting requirements, which requires reports to be posted online and defines an administrative employee (as referenced in section 7).

Sec. 10 Amends AS 14.03.080(c), related to under school age children entering public school, by limiting participation to four- and five-year-old children and clarifying that a child in an early education program does not need to move to kindergarten at age five.

Sec. 11 Reverses the changes in section 10 in 2034.

Sec. 12 Reinststitutes the language from the current AS 14.03.080(d), returning to the current language after the sunset of the early education program takes effect.

Sec. 13 Adds a subsection to AS 14.03.120, relating to district reporting requirements, which establishes an annual report regarding student performance metrics in kindergarten through third grade.

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Senator von Imhof thought asked about annual standardized testing. She thought that it would be helpful if DEED were required to provide an Excel list, each year, of all the test data.

Ms. Tobin continued to address the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 14 Establishes early education programs and grants under AS 14.03, which includes the following subsections:

- AS 14.03.410(a) directs the DEED to provide training to help districts develop and approve early education programs.
- AS 14.03.410(b) authorizes DEED to award 3-year early education grants up to \$3M per year.
- AS 14.03.410(c) requires DEED to rank the districts and prioritize lower ranked districts. This subsection also limits eligibility if there is insufficient need in the district due to Head Start or other programs.
- AS 14.03.410(d) authorizes up to two additional years of grant funding if the program is not able to qualify for ADM inclusion at the end of the 3-year grant.
- AS 14.03.410(e) requires DEED approval of quality standards for ADM inclusion.
- AS 14.03.410(f) makes clear that the grants are subject to appropriation.
- AS 14.03.410(g) provides definitions.
- AS 14.03.420 codifies the Parents-as-Teachers program.

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Mr. King thought there had been an earlier question regarding additional pre-K programs displacing HeadStart programs. He relayed that the department could not approve a grant for creating a new pre-K program unless there was sufficient need within the community.

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Ms. Tobin interjected that the language in the bill pertaining to the matter could be found on Page 9, lines 6-10.

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Mr. King read from the Sectional Analysis:

- Sec. 15 Amends AS 14.07.020(a), relating to duties of the Department of Education and Early Development, by:
- Adding supervision over, and approval of, early education programs.

- Adding the support and intervention requirements relating to reading intervention programs (from section 35).

Sec. 16 Reverses the changes in section 15 in 2034.

Sec. 17 Changes AS 14.07.020(c), relating to the duties of the department, to update the term "pre-elementary school" to "early education program."

Sec. 18 Alters AS 14.07.050, relating to the selection of textbooks, to incorporate the new sections AS 14.30.765 and 14.30.770, which are added under section 35 of this bill.

Sec. 19 Reverses the changes in section 18 in 2034.

Co-Chair Bishop asked whether there was continuity across communities for textbooks.

Mr. King stated that the language being address was specific to the textbooks being provided by the reading intervention program. He affirmed that the textbooks would be uniform across all eligible and awarded programs.

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Senator von Imhof asked whether the single textbook provided for the program could be at odds with local control and cultural sensitivity.

Mr. King replied that the books were specific for the reading intervention specialist assigned to the school.

Ms. Tobin noted that the language on Line 14, page 16 stated that the books were at request of the district and were additional support for the reading intervention services; the districts would need to request the textbooks.

Senator von Imhof queried what districts that did not want the books would do with the funding.

Ms. Tobin stated that the districts would not directly receive the funds. The program would be DEED supported.

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Senator Begich addressed Senator von Imhof's question.

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Mr. King elaborated that there were multiple components to the bill, and the reading intervention specialists would be department employees that would go to low performing districts and would bring their textbooks with them.

Ms. Tobin continued to address the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 20 AS 14.07.165(a), relating to the regulations adopted by the State Board of Education, is amended to establish the standards for early education programs.

Sec. 21 A new paragraph is added to AS 14.07.168, relating to the annual report by the state board of education to the legislature, which requires the inclusion of a review of the effectiveness of the virtual consortium added by section 36 of this bill.

Sec. 22 Reverses the changes in section 21 in 2034.

Sec. 23 Amends AS 14.07.180(a), relating to school districts curricula, by requiring the board to utilize the components of evidence-based reading instruction (Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading comprehension).

Mr. King continued to read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 24 AS 14.14.115(a), relating to cooperative arrangements, expands the ability of a school district to form agreements with private businesses, non-profits, and government agencies, but prohibits state funds from benefiting private educational institutions.

Sec. 25 Add new subsections to AS 14.17.500, relating to student count estimates, which allows

- districts to count early education students from approved programs at one-half of a full-time equivalent student.
- prohibits including early education students that participate in another state or federally funded program.

- provides a process for limiting the budget increase related to including early education students in the ADM count to \$3M per year.

Co-Chair Bishop asked whether Section 29 prevented "double dipping."

Mr. King answered in the affirmative.

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Mr. King continued to read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 26 Sunsets the inclusion of early education students in a district's ADM in 2034.

Sec. 27 Amends AS 14.17.505(a), related to unreserved year-end fund balances, to increase the allowable carryforward balance of school districts from 10% to 25% of a district's expenditures and allows for an approval of additional carryovers.

Mr. King continued to address the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 28 Adds subsection (c) to AS 14.17.505, related to unreserved year-end fund balances, which provides guidance to the department on what a plan for a carryover of greater than 25% should include.

Sec. 29 AS 14.17.905, relating to defining a school for calculating school size factors, is amended to account for the inclusion of early education students when defining an elementary school in a district with between 101 and 425 students.

Sec. 30 Reverses the change in section 29 to conform to the sunset in 2034.

Ms. Tobin read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 31 Amends AS 14.20.015(c), related to preliminary teacher certificates, by adding a requirement that teachers with preliminary certificates complete board required coursework, training, and testing in evidence-based reading instruction.

Sec. 32 Reverses the change in section 32 in 2034.

Sec. 33 Amends AS 14.20.020(i), related to teacher certificates, to require the state board of education to periodically reevaluate the acceptable level of demonstrated competency required to issue a teacher certificate.

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Ms. Tobin continued to speak to the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 34 Adds a new subsection AS 14.20.020(l), related to teacher certificates, which requires teachers to complete board required coursework, training, and testing in evidence-based reading instruction.

Mr. King spoke to Section 35 of the analysis. He explained that the section created AS 14.30.760, which directed the department to create the screening tool used by district, established the screener parameters, and provided support for districts using the screening tool.

Co-Chair Bishop asked how the screening tool would function.

Mr. King relayed that the district and department would develop the tool.

Co-Chair Bishop asked whether the screening tool would be consistent amongst districts.

Mr. King said that a statewide tool would be available for all districts to use; however, districts could use a different tool if it met the standards of the department.

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Senator von Imhof asked about the section Mr. King was speaking to.

Mr. King clarified that he was speaking to a new section of law, AS 14.30.760, and not a section in the bill.

Mr. King addressed a previous question about performance of HeadStart programs and asserted that there was insufficient data to know how effective HeadStart programs were. He

stressed that data collection was an important part of the bill so the state could measure success or failure.

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Mr. King continued to read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 35 This section adds several new sections of law related to reading intervention:

- AS 14.30.760 directs DEED to establish a statewide reading assessment and screening tool to identify students with reading deficiencies and establishes a timeline in which assessments are conducted.
- AS 14.30.765(a) directs each school district to offer intensive reading intervention services to K-3 students exhibiting a reading deficiency and communicate with parents and guardians.
- AS 14.30.765(b) directs school districts to provide individual reading improvement plans for K-3 students exhibiting a reading deficiency and defines the plan's components.

Mr. King said that some rural communities may not have the capacity to provide some of the services. He said that the language was specifically inserted into the bill to address certain communities' inability to provide services.

- AS 14.30.765(c) requires districts to notify a student's parents that their child has demonstrated a reading deficiency along with corresponding information about remedying the deficiency.
- AS 14.30.765(d) requires a parent-teacher conference for K-2 students with a reading deficiency to discuss delayed progression as an intervention.
- AS 14.30.765(e) established a statewide policy to determine if a student is ready for promotion to the fourth grade.
- AS 14.30.765(f) requires a parent-teacher conference for third grade students with a reading deficiency to discuss delayed progression as an intervention and establishes a parental waiver to allow a student to advance to fourth grade without being prepared, which requires an additional 20 hours of summer intervention services.

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Co-Chair Bishop asked whether a parent who chose to advance their child to 4th grade unprepared, was there a mechanism that would discount that student from the overall 4th grade NAPE scores.

Mr. King replied in the negative.

Ms. Tobin referenced a report to the legislature from DEED on metrics and outcomes from K-3rd grade. The information would come directly to the body to give a thorough picture of student progression.

Co-Chair Bishop thought the information was important.

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Senator von Imhof hoped that over time more students would enter fourth grade prepared.

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Mr. King continued speak to the Sectional Analysis:

- AS 14.30.765(g) directs the department to develop a recognition program for improving reading skills.
- AS 14.30.765(h) establishes a good cause exemption from a district's third grade retention policy.
- AS 14.30.765(i) sets forth the process for a parent to request a good cause exemption.
- AS 14.30.765(j) provides an opportunity for a parent that misses the required conference to discussion delaying progress to reschedule that conference.
- AS 14.30.765(k) directs the district to provide additional intervention for students that do not promote or promote with a waiver.
- AS 14.30.765(l) establishes a policy for mid-year promotion of a K-2 student that does not progress to the next grade.
- AS 14.30.765(m) establishes a policy for mid-year promotion of a third-grade student that does not progress to the next grade.
- AS 14.30.765(n) requires that a student promoting mid-year continue the individual reading improvement plan.
- AS 14.30.765(o) limits retention by a superintendent to one year.

- AS 14.30.765(p) provide a definition for reading teacher.

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Ms. Tobin continued to address the Sectional Analysis:

- AS 14.30.770 directs the department to establish a statewide reading program, including five department-funded reading specialists, to assist schools in setting up their intervention services and coach teachers on how to conduct evidence-based reading instruction.
- AS 14.30.775 provides definitions.

Mr. King read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 36 Adds a new section of law, AS 14.30.800, which establishes a virtual education consortium. This consortium allows districts to offer virtual access to student courses and professional development courses through a statewide system hosted by the department of education. This section also creates a reading specialist position to remotely assist districts to improve reading instruction.

Ms. Tobin Read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 37 Provides a definition for "culturally responsive."

Sec. 38 Adds "early education program" to the definition of "organization" in AS 47.17.290, which pertains to the Department of Health and Social Services.

Sec. 39 Repeals AS 14.03.080(d), related to five-year-old students starting kindergarten, to conform to the changes in section 11.

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Mr. King read from the Sectional Analysis:

- Sec. 40 Repeals the following:
- AS 14.03.120(h) (report of reading improvement statistics added in section 13)

- AS 14.03.410 (early education funding added in section 14).
- AS 14.03.420 (Parents-as-Teachers program added in section 14).
- AS 14.17.500(e) and (f) (limiting funding of early education programs add in 25)

- AS 14.20.020(1) (increased requirements for teaching certificates added in section 35)
- AS 14.30.760 (K-3 reading assessments added in section 35)
- AS 14.30.765 (district reading intervention services add in section 35)
- AS 14.30.770 (department reading specialists)
- AS 14.30.775 (definitions related to reading interventions)
- AS 14.30.800 (virtual education consortium)

Sec. 41 Sets a deadline for the department of education to complete the set-up of the virtual education consortium by July 1, 2024.

Sec. 42 Applicability language related to the reading instruction requirement added by section 34 of this bill, which allows teachers with preexisting teaching certificates until July 1, 2024 to meet the new requirements.

Sec. 43 Requires a report from DEED to the legislature on the effectiveness of programs created by this bill to the thirty-eighth legislature, which allows the legislature to consider extending the programs before they are sunset.

Co-Chair Bishop made note of Senator von Imhof's suggestion that the information be easily read on an Excel spreadsheet.

Senator von Imhof thought it was important that the sponsor's had discussed accountability but had not seen any accountability of consequence beyond required reports. She questioned whether there would be consequences for a lack of results.

Mr. King agreed that there were provisions within the bill that required accountability. He asserted that the statewide policy on what districts did with the money

provided by the state for intervention services was an accountability measure. He furthered that the annual and ten-year reports were accountability measures. He stated that the sunset dates were an accountability measure. He contended that districts had to prove that the program worked for it to be extended.

Senator von Imhof understood the logic behind what Mr. King stated. She reiterated that easily accessed and simply presented data, available to the public, should be a significant piece of the accountability measures.

[2:48:16 PM](#)

Mr. King continued to read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 44 Transition language, which directs DEED on how the inclusion of early education students should occur.

Sec. 47 Provides an effective date of July 1, 2022 for all other sections.

Mr. King noted that the \$3 million proposed in the bill for Pre-K program grants was different than the funding in the current budget proposal. He continued to read from the Sectional Analysis:

Sec. 45 Transition language, which allows DEED to begin writing regulations before the sections of this bill take effect.

Sec. 46 Provides an effective date of June 30, 2034 for sections 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30, 32, and 40.

Mr. King pointed out that changing the effective should be considered.

Co-Chair Bishop thanked the presenters.

Ms. Tobin spoke to Section 5, which provided information on parent teacher conferences and discussions with parents on resources and accountability measures. She directed attention to Section 7, which established the annual report to the legislature and school districts. She highlighted Section 9, which directed the district to make that information easily accessible to the public.

Mr. King affirmed that existing statute required districts to report their performance and summarize the information.

2:52:38 PM

AT EASE

2:52:55 PM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Bishop discussed housekeeping.

SB 111 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#

ADJOURNMENT

2:53:31 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.