

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
February 15, 2022  
9:04 a.m.

9:04:47 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Bishop called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:04 a.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

Heidi Teshner, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development; Deborah Riddle, Division Operations Manager, Division of Innovation Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development; Susan McKenzie, Director, Division of Innovation Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development; Senator Shelley Hughes; Senator Tom Begich.

SUMMARY

SB 111 EARLY EDUCATION; READING INTERVENTION

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

#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."

[9:06:55 AM](#)

HEIDI TESHNER, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, relayed that the testifiers would discuss the department's ideas for implementation of SB 111. The legislation was called the "Alaska Academic Improvement and Modernization (AAIM) Act. The bill had multiple components for implementation, and they would share what was being done and the steps for moving forward to fully implement the bill. She elaborated that the bill provided an exciting opportunity to make important and positive changes to Alaska's educational system and if enacted, the bill would ensure success for all Alaska's students. The bill established a statewide policy for ensuring access to universal voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (pre-K), a statewide Parent's as Teacher's program, and guarantee early learning reading intervention services to ensure universal culturally responsible access to every K through third grade reader. In addition, SB 111 ensured that the proposed virtual education consortium builds on current efforts. She pointed out that the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) valued and would rely on the state's Board of Education extensive public process for writing regulations to implement statutes. She notified the committee that the department did not have all the answers regarding who qualified for the early education grant program or which districts were qualified to enroll into the foundation formula as half-time Average Daily Membership (ADM) due to processes and regulations that needed implementation to fully provide the data. She furthered that DEED would work closely with the state board

and other education stakeholders. The department would embrace the state board's public process because it resulted in more effective implementation with school district partners. She indicated that bill had 5 fiscal notes with fiscal impact and was a "huge lift" for the department that required it to expand its capacity. She furthered that she provided the committee a high level outline for the meeting and planned to discuss the areas of the bill that directly impacted students: early education programs, comprehensive reading intervention programs, and the virtual educational consortium.

[9:10:53 AM](#)

Ms. Teshner stated that there were two components of the bill that would not be addressed in the presentation: teacher training and preparation, and accountability. The components were still under development.

[9:11:42 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman remarked that he was not familiar with the intricacies of education but observed from a prior hearing on the bill that the state ranked last in eighth grade reading and fifth in third grade reading and towards the bottom in mathematics out of 50 states. He wanted to know if the proposals were a solution to the problem that he wanted to fix. He requested information regarding the districts' statewide rankings and their trends over the last several years. He wanted to appropriate the money to where it was most needed. He was confident the problem laid in the rural northern areas of the state. He encouraged the department to share its solutions to the problem. He characterized the state's schools scores as "alarming." He found it unacceptable that Alaska's students were scoring last out of 50 states. Ms. Teshner replied that she hoped that the other department staff would be able to provide the answers. She agreed that student's scores needed to improve.

[9:15:31 AM](#)

Senator von Imhof remarked that one of the steps of being able to address the problem is to first identify the problem of student's not reading to the national standard. She wanted to know the reason why and where the problem existed. She remarked that the solution in the bill called

for reading interventions and to identify the worst performing schools and provide more resources. She wondered whether DEED knew if the approach worked. She referenced the national data that from 2003 to 2019 eighth grade reading was steady and dropped precipitously as well as 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading. She deduced that COVID affected Alaska worse than other states according to the data and wondered whether it was COVID or something else. She stressed the sharp drop in 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading levels and asked why it happened and why DEED believed that its intervention plan would solve the problem.

[9:17:28 AM](#)

DEBORAH RIDDLE, DIVISION OPERATIONS MANAGER, DIVISION OF INNOVATION EDUCATION EXCELLENCE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, replied that in 2012 the state adopted new content standards for reading and mathematics and in 2013 a new assessment based on the new more rigorous standards was implemented. She believed that was a reason for the drop in scores.

[9:18:10 AM](#)

Senator von Imhof ascertained that if the state adopted more rigorous standards the teaching should have become more rigorous, and students would be closer to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) average. She wondered how a more rigorous curriculum could make the students perform worse than before they were adopted.

[9:18:56 AM](#)

SUSAN MCKENZIE, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF INNOVATION EDUCATION EXCELLENCE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, appreciated the question regarding why it was happening. She pondered the same question and spent the last six months researching for the answer. She was still learning all the reasons. She referenced a reading survey DEED sent out to all districts that alluded to what was happening at different district and school levels. She was also engaged with the state's education service agency to disaggregate all the assessment data to determine where it was happening and discern why it was happening. She felt that there was a lot left to learn.

Senator von Imhof asked what the results of the survey was.

Ms. McKenzie replied that she did not have the survey in front of her but remembered that there was a variety of curriculum being used in the state by different schools, which might offer useful information. She learned that there was a variety of different screening assessments for the K-3 district students and some districts were not progress monitoring. She discovered that districts were using a variety of interventions and offering professional development. She questioned whether consistency was an issue.

[9:21:54 AM](#)

Senator Wilson determined that there was a lack of standardization and consistency. He wondered whether the department was still in favor of local control. He had heard inconsistency was a problem.

Ms. Teshner responded that local control was necessary in some respects but might not be the best method when ensuring reading success. She offered that the department would discuss the issue if the bill was enacted.

[9:23:37 AM](#)

Senator Hoffman asked if there was anything in the bill that eroded local control.

Ms. McKenzie replied that there were some options in the bill that provided menus for intervention materials for districts that were struggling in addition to curriculum support but still allowed the districts some local control.

[9:24:30 AM](#)

Senator Olson wondered whether the information included private schools.

Ms. Teshner answered that it was solely public school data. Senator Olson believed that the data was alarming.

[9:25:37 AM](#)

Ms. Riddle discussed the current plan for early education. She explained that currently there were two program managers for early learning: a state funded program manager and a Head Start liaison. The department provided oversight

for four different programs. She elaborated that the pre-K grants were voluntary and comprehensive based on 4 and 5 year old students with 17 grantees serving 714 students. She mentioned the Head Start and Early Head Start grants that DEED supported with a General Funds (GF) match of about 13 percent. The grants served 17 grantees in 98 communities serving 3,469 students. She highlighted the Parents as Teachers program supported by DEED with 5 grantees serving 164 students. She underlined the Best Beginnings program that provided books to students through the Imagination Library as well as Little Learner Camps serving 324 students.

She continued with the resources the department provided. She offered that in the prior year early learning guidelines were adopted by the State Board of Education as a set of standards from birth through kindergarten that were culturally responsive and aligned to current standards. She elucidated that the department utilized a pre-K assessment called "Core Advantage" that was provided to all pre-K grantees and Head Start grantees in the state. The Alaska Developmental Profile, which was a kindergarten assessment, was required for all kindergarteners when they began school. The department also had pre-elementary activities and program goals that were provided to all grantees.

[9:28:12 AM](#)

Senator Olson voiced that his four year old twins were enrolled in Head Start and he was impressed with their reading skills.

[9:28:52 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman wondered whether DEED would provide the status of all the districts. He requested that the commissioner attend a future committee meeting and share the data in order to focus on the solution. He wanted state funding to make a difference.

[9:30:13 AM](#)

Co-chair Bishop referred to the programs available for early education and asked if they were all grants and not programs for all children in every district. Ms. Riddle answered that when DEED provided pre-K grants, they also

provided some oversight through a program manager that approved the budget and programming. She added that the funds for the other grantees were in support of their specific programs. Co-chair Bishop reiterated his question regarding whether every district participated in the programs. Ms. Riddle replied in the negative. Co-chair Bishop deemed that it likely contributed to the problem.

[9:31:29 AM](#)

Senator Wielechowski was still listening for the answers to Co-Chair Stedman's and Senator von Imhof's questions. He wanted to hear a definitive answer and believed that it was time for a frank discussion because the problems were serious. He asked what the top indicators of children performing well in school were.

Ms. McKenzie replied that there were many factors that affected a child's progress at school. She listed poverty, demographics, adverse childhood experiences, limited parental involvement, disabilities, language barriers, etc. She emphasized that addressing the problems was a "science" that was developed over the last 40 years. She discussed teacher development and preparation as a skillset based on the science of reading that she had observed helped children become successful readers. She expressed certainty that what was developed for helping children read worked. She voiced that many of the tools from the science of reading were included in the bill. She mentioned the prior discussion regarding local control and determined that working with the districts on their assessments and pairing the needs with an intervention based on the science of reading and specific to what the individual child needed was essential. She viewed it as a first step in solving the problems.

[9:35:49 AM](#)

Senator von Imhof surmised that teacher preparation and teacher development was important and wondered whether it was being done since 2015, when fourth grade and eighth grade reading began to significantly decline. She wondered what efforts were done in the areas statewide from 2015 to the present. Ms. McKenzie remarked that she could only answer from the time she began working for DEED. She thought that what had been done in the last 6 months was significant. She noted that the Alaska Reading Playbook was

recently completed with a series of webinars contributing to professional development. She elaborated that the division was working with NWEA [it did not correspond to an acronym] and the Consortium on Reading Sciences to offer a science of reading class online that was currently full at 100 participants. The department was offering two classes based on the science of reading, one for administrators and one for teachers. In addition, the department would host a science of reading symposium at the end of April 2022.

[9:38:49 AM](#)

Senator von Imhof asked for the department to provide the answer prior to Ms. McKenzie's tenure. She commented that the school district had the Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS) data, which was the annual April school assessment. She shared that her office obtained the data from 2016 to 2021 that was available per district, per school, and per grade from third through tenth grade in math and language arts. She noted that DEED collected all types of demographic data. She assumed that DEED looked at the data and its trends over time. She wondered whether anyone had analyzed the data and seen trends up or down, and then had discussions with the teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses across the state. She shared that she had engaged in the conversations, and it was illuminating and detailed. She wondered whether DEED performed that detailed analysis and if so, could they present the information. Ms. McKenzie replied that she was currently engaged in the analysis and would present it in the future.

[9:41:43 AM](#)

Senator Wilson queried what barriers the school districts faced for applying the techniques. Ms. McKenzie responded that many of Alaska's teachers came from different states, and some were not well educated in the science of reading. She addressed leadership and offered that if school leaders were versed in the science of reading it enabled teaching it in the school. She emphasized that teachers needed leadership and training and that curriculum played a role.

[9:43:52 AM](#)

Co-Chair Bishop interjected that she described a hiring issue at the local level regarding reviewing the resume of the teacher.

Senator Wilson suggested teaching school board members the newest science of reading practices so that districts know their importance and adopt them as best practices. He wondered whether the state board was engaged in the process. Ms. McKenzie strongly agreed with Senator Wilson's comments. She stated that was the reason for the symposium where one of the goals was to instruct participants on what the science of reading was, and the second goal was how to move the dial. Senator Wilson recommended required attendance and thought that more accountability was necessary to justify more spending. He asked about the early reading programs and wondered which one worked the best since they all "had a different price tag."

[9:46:17 AM](#)

Ms. Riddle responded that Head Start was the most successful early childhood program and the department had the most data on the program. Senator Wilson spoke of the cost of each program. He referenced statistics that Head Start cost \$2 thousand per student, Parents as Teachers cost \$3 thousand and Pre-K cost \$4.5 thousand per student. He wondered why Head Start was not being expanded since it was effective, and it cost less. Ms. Riddle relayed that she had not heard him include pre-K in Senator Wilson's question and answered that the department had the most data and oversight over pre-K and obtained the Head Start data from the federal government. Senator Wilson stated that he did not receive a clear answer regarding which program was most effective and asked for the department to follow up.

[9:48:31 AM](#)

Senator von Imhof cited that as of FY 2022, \$3.2 million in funds for 714 students in 17 school districts had been awarded. She wondered about data for pre-K grants. She asked what data was available and whether it was collected and compared to Head Start grants. Ms. Riddle agreed to provide the information to the committee and stated that she misspoke earlier and had as much data about pre-K. Senator von Imhof requested trend lines over time and an analysis that compared and contrasted programs to determine

what program provided the best "bang for the buck" and analysis on how dollars were used.

[9:49:59 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman recognized that solving the problem would be expensive and wanted the funding directed at the solution. He referenced the significant amount of funding coming to Alaska for broadband and he wanted the department to examine whether lack of communication was part of the issue in some school districts. He hoped to direct funds to areas of the state that experienced more broadband challenges. He wondered whether there was a correlation.

Ms. Teshner responded that the department reached out to school districts asking about broadband capacity for assessments. She offered that the department had not done an analysis of the correlation between learning and bandwidth and would investigate the issue.

[9:51:46 AM](#)

Ms. McKenzie spoke to how the department would implement SB 111 as it pertained to early learning. In addition to the already adopted early learning guidelines for early education, the state Board of Education would need to adopt standards for approving early education programs. She delineated that the standards would be a set of criteria DEED would use to measure and approve early learning education programs. She exemplified that one standard would align an early learning program with the emphasis on early literacy concepts. Besides adopting standards, other steps for implementation would include compiling a list of early learning programs that would be evaluated by the set of standards adopted by the state board. A process would be developed for providing .5 ADM to districts that utilized approved programs and funding would be implemented. She furthered that a supervision and monitoring process would be developed for approved early education programs.

[9:53:35 AM](#)

Ms. McKenzie continued her remarks. She indicated that another step taken would be to begin or improve early education programs by determining which districts were eligible for a three year grant. Prioritizing the grants would be determined by using the existing accountability

system and keeping within the \$3 million annual budget. She reminded the committee that districts were eligible if DEED determined that an insufficient number of children attended high quality childcare programs. High quality would be determined by the program's meeting or exceeding the set of standards. She noted that the last factor in eligibility was to ensure the existing programs would continue to operate after a district early education program was established. The goal was not to replace high quality programs. She provided an example of grant eligibility - a village program that had high quality standards but could not accommodate all its children. She stated that how long it took to establish early learning pre-K programs in all of Alaska's schools depended upon approval, priority, funding, and interest as participation was voluntary.

[9:55:33 AM](#)

Senator Wilson asked about the standards and what would happen if some districts opted out. Ms. McKenzie responded that DEED would adopt a set of criteria that would determine whether an existing program was approved. She explained that the department would examine each existing program and use the criteria to decide whether it was acceptable. Senator Wilson reported that currently school districts were not required to submit daily attendance records to the state. He wondered how DEED would obtain the records. Ms. McKenzie replied that she did not discuss daily attendance however, she acknowledged that districts were required to submit attendance records.

Ms. Teshner interjected that when DEED took the regulations to the state board, they would include the steps the districts had to take to be accountable.

[9:57:45 AM](#)

Co-Chair Bishop asked how long Ms. McKenzie had been working in education and her background information. He wondered whether she was new to the department. Ms. McKenzie answered that she worked for 39 years in education. She listed the positions she held: teacher, special education teacher, Title 1 reading specialist, principle at all grade levels, special education director, and district superintendent. She clarified that this was her first year with DEED. Commissioner Bishop recognized

that she worked for the department for 5 months but spent her lifetime in education.

[9:58:36 AM](#)

Senator von Imhof ascertained that the committee wanted the testifiers to start with a "story." She suggested the story start with what was currently happening in Alaska, its successes, weaknesses, and progress and identify where additional resources would help. She asked Ms. McKenzie to share data and stressed that the state had limited funding. She wanted to make targeted investments. She wanted more much more relevant details regarding the "key and strategic investments" the bill offered to "move the needle" towards improvement. She asserted that she had not heard the answers in the discussion and offered to work with Ms. McKenzie.

Co-Chair Bishop opined that the department's commissioner or deputy commissioner should testify in response to Senator von Imhof's request.

[10:01:48 AM](#)

Senator Wielechowski agreed with Senator von Imhof's remarks and wanted to better understand the history of the issue. He relayed that Senator Begich was involved in the Moore lawsuit and believed that an explanation of the case would be helpful.

[10:02:56 AM](#)

SENATOR TOM BEGICH, SPONSOR, observed that the testimony lacked the larger context of the lawsuit. He related that the Moore lawsuit was filed by the Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children of which he was a member. The lawsuit was successful, but it took two years of litigation. He elaborated that experts testified from all over the state and DEED testified at length. The federal judge, Judge Sharon Gleason, ruled that the state had failed to meet its responsibility to public education. He emphasized that SB 111 came from those involved in the Moore lawsuit and not the department. The lawsuit identified that the state had failed to ensure that each school district's curriculum aligned to the state's standards. He noted the prior discussion regarding consistent standards and stated that inconsistent standards

were part of the reason the lawsuit was successful. The ruling stated that the state failed to pay attention to content areas that were not covered by the state's testing and programs. In addition, the court ruled that the state's interventions were limited in scope and had not addressed the specific strength and weaknesses of the underperforming districts regarding meeting the constitutional criteria for establishing an education. The court ruled that the state had not considered pre-K and other intensive learning designed to prepare students to learn and the state's intervention failed to address teaching capacity due to high turnover. He emphasized that all the findings were incorporated in the bill. The current department leadership was not the leadership involved in the original lawsuit. He indicated that what the bill tried to achieve was to answer the question why the students were performing poorly and what could be done to solve the problem. He shared that Judge Gleason and the experts had outlined what could be done to address the problems, but the department had lacked the capacity to achieve the solutions. He suggested viewing the broader picture that he interpreted as the solutions lied in the evidence of what was currently known to work.

He continued by addressing Senator von Imhof's request for data. He stated that the state had the data that could be found in the Early Learning Coordination document that was on BASIS. He emphasized that the department had the information and showed all the early learning outcomes, kindergarten preparedness, and pre-K grants outcomes. He countered that the bill was built on exactly the answer to the question asked in the Moore lawsuit, which was what were the things that could be successfully accomplished to properly educate Alaska's children. He furthered that in analyzing that question over the last decade the state identified a number of areas that were successful. The case spoke to the areas of accountability, content standards, and concluded that local control was important but had to be responsive to the requirements laid out by DEED. He commented that how local school districts carried out the department's requirements was designed locally but DEED had a role to ensure the curriculum met the highest standards and that was lacking. He offered to share his notes on the case with the committee.

[10:08:04 AM](#)

Senator Hoffman wondered what the state was "purchasing" for the significant cost of the legislation. He asked whether the proposal included evaluations, benchmarks, and targets. He stated that the state was already spending the highest per capita on education in the country. He deduced that the committee needed the answers concerning its expectations of success.

[10:10:36 AM](#)

Senator Begich replied that the bill was replete with strong reporting requirements from school districts annually and spoke to the establishment of an evaluation team comprised of early learning experts. He informed the committee that it took four years to demonstrate adequate progress in reading. The annual review would provide the answers to what was working on statewide and district wide levels. He offered that the provisions were the first time measures and outcomes were required in legislation. He hoped that an amendment was added to the bill that required the department to be accountable to the public as well. He agreed that if the bill lacked accountability "it was a waste of money." The annual review process would determine whether the bill was accomplishing what it was designed to do.

[10:12:57 AM](#)

Senator Hoffman commented that regardless of the bill, he hoped that DEED had plans to improve education since the state was testing at the bottom. He believed that the department should find the current situation unacceptable and should adopt a plan regardless of the bill. He asked if Senator Begich agreed with his statement. Senator Begich replied in the affirmative. He added that DEED identified actions they were working on that were built from the concepts in the bill. Senator Hoffman stressed that SB 111 should include explicit expectations for improvement targets and thought that was lacking in the bill. He reiterated his question regarding benchmarks and what defined success. Senator Begich replied that he would defer to the department whether it was possible to set specific benchmarks and added that there was no limit to what could be included in the legislation. He deemed that a realistic goal could be established. He recommended asking the department.

[10:16:09 AM](#)

Ms. Teshner interjected that the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provisions included targets. She exemplified that the proficiency for English language should be 70 percent by the 2026 - 2027 school year.

[10:17:34 AM](#)

SENATOR SHELLEY HUGHES, SPONSOR, addressed the concerns of the Senators. She shared that the state had not had intensive reading intervention strategies, so state data was lacking. She indicated that the data for the solutions in the bill came from other states and the sponsors found it was necessary to identify programs that worked. She exemplified Mississippi and noted that the state ranked in the bottom 10 percent and within 5 years the state ranked in the top ten. She stated that it took at least 5 years to see results because the students had to begin in kindergarten and advance through grade 4. She believed that it was reasonable to set a goal of 5 years. She noted that impoverished students and students from different ethnic groups increased their proficiency in multiple states and believed that it demonstrated evidence that the proposals worked. She furthered that the teachers in Mississippi admitted that they lacked instruction in the science of reading and once they received the training the state's improved ranking demonstrated that it helped students.

[10:20:51 AM](#)

Senator Olson cited an opinion published by the Bush Caucus on the bill that was unfavorable towards the approach in the legislation. He wondered whether the sponsors had comments on the issue. Senator Hughes replied that she did not question the concerns raised by the caucus regarding the students in their districts. However, she believed that the information the caucus had was lacking and incorrect regarding SB 111, which made the conclusions erroneous. She deferred further answer to Senator Begich.

[10:22:11 AM](#)

Senator Begich specified that the House rural caucus members and the First Alaskans Institute wrote the article for the Alaska Daily News that made incorrect statements and he wanted to correct the record. He indicated the

article stated that the bill was English language only and that was incorrect. The bill supported the local development of language education. He cited references in the article to "high stakes testing" and noted that the fault for that perception rested with the bill and testifiers misusing the words "tests" and "assessments." The provisions referred to "screeners" that were simple one minute tools used to identify if a student was struggling with a specific task, whether it was in Yupik, Spanish, English, etc. and placed an intervention for the child if necessary. He emphasized that the bill was not replete with high stakes testing which was antithetical to what the bill was trying to accomplish, reading proficiency. He noted statements that the bill eliminated local control and commented that on page 25, line 22 of the bill that allowed local control of the screeners. Finally, he specified comments in the article that the bill took away the power of parents. He remarked that it was not the case and the bill allowed for parents input. He believed that a deeper issue was that the Moore case demonstrated that there was a lack of faith that the department could deliver on education, and it lacked follow through on prior legislation. He heard from school districts asking what the proof for things like cultural responsibility was. He assured the committee that the bill considered all viewpoints. He was troubled that the implication was the sponsors were not paying attention and emphasized that they had. He shared that Alaska had standards from the 1990's that were established for Alaska Native Cultural Responsibility and Competency in the classroom that were written by elders but had not been updated since then. He spoke to the need to update the standards and felt that could be accomplished in the bill. He wanted to update how the concepts of parent and guardian were defined to reflect societal changes. He suggested that increasing the engagement of the indigenous population in formulating evaluations would be beneficial. He offered that reading specialists were an integral part of the bill that would be DEED employees placed in districts. He noted that the article implied that the positions would be an unfunded mandate for the districts. He cited issues around writing the regulations if the bill was adopted and suggested including a provision requiring regulation review by the bill's stakeholders. He reported that he was initially "embarrassed and angered" by the article until he realized that he was not listening very well and believed the bill

could incorporate ideas outside the context of the sponsors.

[10:29:07 AM](#)

Senator Wilson asked whether all districts had the capacity to perform the reporting requirements or would the department provide technical assistance to help the districts.

Ms. Riddle answered that DEED currently collected data from the districts and had systems set up to provide technical assistance and training and the bill's reporting requirements would be added to the established systems. Senator Wilson clarified that the department would provide the capacity for the reporting requirements. Ms. Riddle replied in the affirmative.

[10:31:49 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman followed up on Senator Hoffman's comments. He was not convinced that the state's scores could not decrease further, but the rankings would not reflect it since the state was ranked the lowest. He recognized that the state had severe financial constraints and was uncertain whether that affected the rankings. He stated that there was interest in increasing the state's education spending. He wanted to hear from the commissioner regarding all that the department was doing to address the issue and its thoughts on the legislation and how success would be measured. He assumed that the status quo was not acceptable to the department and wondered whether it was internally developing a response.

[10:34:40 AM](#)

AT EASE

[10:36:25 AM](#)

RECONVENED

[10:36:31 AM](#)

Senator Wilson wondered whether the commissioner would be agreeable to setting up a taskforce to address increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA), so it was not an "ad hoc" increase and it benefitted all districts.

[10:37:15 AM](#)

Senator von Imhof felt that there should be a question of how the Base Student Allocation (BSA) translated to results. She wanted to discuss the structural, financial, and accountability elements and how it intermingled with the BSA formula. She did not believe the issue was solely the BSA.

[10:38:17 AM](#)

Co-Chair Bishop requested historical data, specifically to Alaska's rankings.

[10:38:40 AM](#)

Co-Chair Bishop discussed committee business.

[10:39:24 AM](#)

AT EASE

[10:39:38 AM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Bishop cancelled the afternoon's meeting.

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

#

ADJOURNMENT

[10:39:56 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:39 a.m.