

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 13, 2023

8:01 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Jamie Allard, Co-Chair  
Representative Justin Ruffridge, Co-Chair  
Representative Mike Prax  
Representative CJ McCormick  
Representative Tom McKay  
Representative Rebecca Himschoot  
Representative Andi Story

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT**

Representative Alyse Galvin

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 69

"An Act relating to the reclassification of first class cities as second class cities; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 106

"An Act authorizing lump sum payments for certain teachers as retention and recruitment incentives; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 105

"An Act relating to parental rights in a child's education; relating to access to school records; relating to sex education, human reproduction education, and human sexuality education; relating to school disciplinary and safety programs; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 21

"An Act relating to group insurance coverage and self-insurance coverage for school district employees, employees of the University of Alaska, and employees of other governmental units in the state; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 69

SHORT TITLE: RECLASSIFICATION OF FIRST CLASS CITIES

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) CRONK

02/10/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/10/23	(H)	EDC, CRA
03/01/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/01/23	(H)	Heard & Held
03/01/23	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/13/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 106

SHORT TITLE: TEACHER RECRUITMENT; LUMP SUM PAYMENT

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

03/08/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/08/23	(H)	EDC, FIN
03/13/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 105

SHORT TITLE: SEX/REPRODUCTION EDUCATION; SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

03/08/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/08/23	(H)	EDC, JUD
03/13/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 21

SHORT TITLE: SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSUR

SPONSOR(s): VANCE

01/19/23	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23
01/19/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/19/23	(H)	CRA, EDC, L&C
01/27/23	(H)	CRA REFERRAL REMOVED
01/27/23	(H)	BILL REPRINTED
03/13/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE CRONK  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HB 69.

DAVE STANCLIFF, Staff  
Representative Mike Cronk  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** On behalf of Representative Cronk, prime sponsor, answered questions on HB 69.

SUSIE MCKENZIE, Director  
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence  
Department of Education and Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** On behalf of the sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor, presented HB 106 and HB 105.

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Operations Manager  
Division of Innovation and Educational Excellence  
Department of Education and Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave the sectional analysis for HB 106 and HB 105, on behalf of the sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor.

LISA STEWART, Retired Teacher  
Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HB 105.

KRISTINE GUGEL, Parent  
Chugiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HB 105.

REPRESENTATIVE SARAH VANCE  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HB 21.

RANDY TRANI, PhD, Superintendent  
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HB 21.

BETSY WOOD, Acting Chief Health Administrator

Division of Retirement and Benefits

Department of Administration

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 21.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:01:10 AM](#)

**CO-CHAIR JAMIE ALLARD** called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Representatives Prax, McCormick, McKay, Himschoot, Allard, and Ruffridge were present at the call to order. Representative Story arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **HB 69-RECLASSIFICATION OF FIRST CLASS CITIES**

[8:02:04 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 69, "An Act relating to the reclassification of first class cities as second class cities; and providing for an effective date."

[8:02:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE CRONK, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, explained that HB 69 would allow a community to reclassify from a one-city community to a two-city community for the purpose of combining a school district with another school district.

[8:03:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT questioned which communities would the proposed legislation currently apply to, and she questioned if there would be other cities forthcoming.

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK replied that currently only Tanana would be affected.

DAVE STANCLIFF, Staff, Representative Mike Cronk, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Cronk, prime sponsor, replied to a follow-up question, explaining that there are four cities in the state which fall below the 400-person minimum requirement to be a first-class city. He stated that, if the legislation passes, Tanana would not be required to make the change, as the change would not be mandatory.

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK, in response to a follow-up question, stated that Tanana requested this because its school is not supported well enough by the local government. He added that the government is under stress because the population has fallen to 241 residents. He continued that the district is working with a larger school district, but ultimately it is up to the community to decide.

[8:05:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX questioned whether reclassification to a second-class city would still require local tax contribution.

MR. STANCLIFF replied that this would change when a city moves from a first- to second-class city, and this is the reason Tanana is considering the change.

[8:06:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY expressed the understanding that this change would need to be made through statute.

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK responded that because Tanana is a first-class city, the existing statute does not allow this change.

[8:07:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX commented that first-class cities provide some services. He questioned whether these would be affected by a change in class.

MR. STANCLIFF replied that the local community would have to decide, and they would do this under the proposed bill by a majority vote. He expressed uncertainty concerning the local services; however, he stated that the city is having difficulty obtaining quorum votes. He expressed the understanding that Tanana is failing as a city under the first-class status.

[8:08:39 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 8:08 a.m.

[8:08:52 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD opened public testimony on HB 69. After ascertaining there was no one who wished to testify, she closed public testimony.

[8:09:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether the school districts had responded.

[8:09:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK replied that the Tanana City School District is under contract with the Yukon-Koyukuk School District (YKSD), and now Tanana is basically functioning under. He stated that both school districts are in agreement.

[8:10:25 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced HB 69 was held over.

[8:10:52 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:10 a.m. to 8:11 a.m.

**HB 106-TEACHER RECRUITMENT; LUMP SUM PAYMENT**

[8:11:29 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 106, "An Act authorizing lump sum payments for certain teachers as retention and recruitment incentives; and providing for an effective date."

[8:11:58 AM](#)

SUSIE MCKENZIE, Director, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), presented HB 106 on behalf of the bill sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor. She stated that the proposed legislation would address the fourth priority of Alaska's Education Challenge, which is "to prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals." She stated that DEED acknowledges that teachers have a tremendous impact on student

achievement, and notes there are approximately 7,300 teachers working in Alaska public schools, and teacher stability and effectiveness are essential components of student achievement. She gave examples of teacher turnover and the number of teachers coming from out of state. She reminded the committee that the governor ordered a task force to examine teacher retention and recruitment back in 2020. Reported from a previous survey, she explained, the highest-ranking issue with teacher retention is salary, and HB 106 proposes to address the highest ranked finding of the report. She noted the bill would create three tiers, and this will be discussed in the sectional analysis.

[8:16:09 AM](#)

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Operations Manager, Division of Innovation and Educational Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development, on behalf of the sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor, presented the sectional analysis for HB 106 [copy included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**Section 1:** Amends uncodified law by adding a new section that establishes a program that would pay certificated full-time teachers with a lump sum payment on, or around, July 1, 2024, July 1, 2025, and July 1, 2026. The payment of the lump sum appropriation is contingent on appropriations made for this purpose in the relevant fiscal years (FY2025, FY2026, and FY2027). The bill limits the payment to full-time teachers assigned to a classroom teaching assignment and specifically excludes temporary, substitute, or assistant teachers. To be eligible for payment, a teacher must occupy a teaching position for the entire school year immediately preceding the date of payment.

In addition, to be eligible for payment, teachers would be required to submit an application and school districts would be responsible for certifying the applications. The Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) would develop the application and it would be due no later than the last day of school for the eligible school year. Once the application and certification requirements are met, DEED would grant school districts funding to pay the retention and recruitment incentive as a lump sum payment to eligible teachers.

The bill also considers all lump sum payments compensation for the purposes of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS).

Finally, DEED may adopt regulations necessary to carry out the purposes of this bill.

**Section 2:** This bill is effective on July 1, 2023

[8:18:35 AM](#)

MS. MCKENZIE further summarized the tiers and proceeded to briefly go over the fiscal note [copy included in the committee packet].

[8:21:44 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced HB 106 was held over.

**HB 105-SEX/REPRODUCTION EDUCATION; SCHOOLS**

[8:21:53 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 105, "An Act relating to parental rights in a child's education; relating to access to school records; relating to sex education, human reproduction education, and human sexuality education; relating to school disciplinary and safety programs; and providing for an effective date."

[8:22:19 AM](#)

SUSIE MCKENZIE, Director, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development, presented HB 105, on behalf of the sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor. She said, "The fifth priority of Alaska's Education Challenge is to improve the safety and wellbeing of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes." She listed ways this is done, as follows: key learning courses; an initiative for positive behavior, intervention, and support; a trauma-engaged framework; and family input throughout.

MS. MCKENZIE related that research shows students whose parents stay involved in school do better overall. Parent engagement is required in many ways, as follows: parent permission to assess

and engage a child in special education; attendance of field trips; pertaining to the Alaska READS Act; and handing out medication at school. She said that the importance of parental rights was established under the federal Parents Rights and Responsibilities Act of 1995, and this prohibits federal, state, or local governments from interfering with the right of parents to govern the upbringing of their children. She said in 2016, the federal Parent Rights Bill was passed, and this adopted school board policies to promote the involvement of parents in the education programming of school districts, and this includes the recognition of the authority of parents to object and withdraw children from an activity, class, or program.

MS. MCKENZIE said HB 105 would "affirm and expand Alaska parental rights" and strengthen "the partnership between parents and school by meaningful notice and consent requests."

[8:25:26 AM](#)

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Operations Manager, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development, on behalf of the sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor, presented the sectional analysis for HB 105 [copy included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1:

Amends AS 14.03.016, A parent's right to direct the education of the parent's child, (a)(3) by adding to the list of parental rights regarding student's participation in activities and classes that include content involving gender. This subsection also adds an "opt-in" provision stating that parents need to provide written permission for their student(s) to participate in the activity or class. Additional language is added under (a)(7) that a parent must provide written permission before a name or pronoun may be changed in student records and under (a)(8) that parents must also be notified in writing of legal remedies available to them.

Section 2:

Amends AS 14.03.016(d) by adding the definition of "gender identity" as the internal sense of being either male, female, or something else, which may or may not correspond with an individual's biological sex.

Section 3:

Amends AS 14.03.016 by adding two new subsections. Subsection (e) states that a parent may file civil action against a school district who violates a policy or procedure adopted under (a) of this section (Section 1 of this bill). Subsection (f) states that a school district that knowingly or recklessly violates a policy or procedure under (a) of this section (Section 1 of this bill) is liable for not less than \$5,000 in civil penalties and may be liable for treble damages upon a showing of a violation established by clear and convincing evidence.

Section 4:

Amends AS 14.03.115, Access to school records by parent, foster parent, or guardian, by adding language that prohibits school districts or regional educational attendance areas from selectively withholding information regarding a child's physical, medical, or mental health from a parent, foster parent, or guardian unless the information may result in child abuse or neglect.

Section 5:

Amends AS 14.30.361, Sex education, human reproductive education, and human sexuality education, by adding two new subsections. Subsection (e) states that a class or program involving sex education, human reproduction education, and human sexuality education requires parental notice and permission. Subsection (f) states that these topics may not be attended by a child before grade four (4) except as provided by AS 14.30.355, Sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention.

Section 6: Amends AS 14.33.120, A parent's right to direct the education of the parent's child, (a) adding to the list of procedures required by school districts and regional educational attendance areas on addressing the physical safety and privacy of students in locker rooms and restrooms. The separation of students by biological sex, access to single occupant facilities, or other safety and privacy protocols is required.

Section 7:

Repeals AS 14.03.016, A parent's right to direct the education of the parent's child, subsection (d)(2), which further defines "human reproduction or sexual matters" to not include sexual assault awareness and prevention training required under AS 14.30.355, Sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention, nor dating violence and abuse awareness and prevention training required under AS 14.30.356, Teen dating violence and abuse awareness and prevention program.

Section 8:

This bill is effective on July 1, 2023.

MS. MCKENZIE noted there is a \$6,000 fiscal note for the purpose of getting regulations in place.

[8:29:49 AM](#)

LISA STEWART, Retired Teacher, gave invited testimony in favor of HB 105. She emphasized the influence of family experiences in shaping people, including their life choices. She shared a personal story of her upbringing, education, and work experience to help illustrate her support of HB 105. She stated that working with parents is crucial, as parents are a student's first teacher. She gave examples of how she worked with teachers to "lean in" and listen to their concerns. She advised that parental involvement initiatives are increasing nationwide and are required for student success.

[8:38:59 AM](#)

MS. STEWART argued that separating restrooms and locker rooms shows support for student safety and the rights for students and parents. She continued, explaining that given her diverse experience in education, she can confirm a student's success is the result of parental involvement. In closing, she provided her belief that children should be able to count on educators. She expressed the opinion that it would be counterproductive for educators to not be on the same page with parents and students.

[8:42:07 AM](#)

KRISTINE GUGEL, Parent, gave invited testimony in support of HB 105. She began by underscoring the previous testifier's testimony. She provided her background in relation to family, education, and community. She stated that she has worked in a

correctional facility for 12 years, and she highlighted this as impactful in regard to relationships and trust. She expressed the opinion the parental involvement in children's lives is important as part of the "education team."

[8:48:40 AM](#)

MS. GUGEL stated that family involvement is critical in education for the child's well-being and for the school district. She explained being involved in her own children's classrooms, which resulted in her own children being involved in classroom activities. She urged the passing of HB 105.

[8:53:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Gugel if she had ever been stopped from going into a public school to assist in a classroom.

MS. GUGEL replied she had not had this experience; the classrooms were open and available, and she had received encouragement from teachers as well as the principal.

[8:54:03 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced HB 105 was held over.

[8:54:22 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:54 a.m. to 8:55 a.m.

**HB 21-SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSUR**

[8:55:48 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 21, "An Act relating to group insurance coverage and self-insurance coverage for school district employees, employees of the University of Alaska, and employees of other governmental units in the state; and providing for an effective date."

[8:56:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SARAH VANCE, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented the sponsor statement of HB 21 [copy included

in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Bill 21 amends current statute to create the opportunity for school districts, the University of Alaska, and governmental units such as cities and boroughs to optionally participate in AlaskaCare: our state healthcare program. These entities would have the choice to opt into the pool as an entire entity, enabling Alaska's Department of Administration to negotiate a better cost of healthcare.

Research conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of Alaska Anchorage suggests that Alaskans spend the most per resident, face the highest insurance premiums, and have seen overall spending grow much faster than the rest of the country. Alaskans spent more out-of-pocket dollars on health care costs than residents in any other state in 2019, according to a recent Health Affairs study. In fact, in less than 25 years Alaska's spending for health care increased more than 5 times over, growing an average 7.8% per year compared to the U.S. average of 6.0%. On average, 45% of our state educational budget funds healthcare and benefits, leaving only 54% to go towards the classroom.

Specifically, school districts across Alaska are facing increasing costs of healthcare that is impacting recruitment and retention of teachers. If passed, House Bill 21 could ease the financial burden of school districts and give the State of Alaska more leverage to negotiate with healthcare providers, improving services for Alaskans with the potential of saving millions of dollars.

[8:59:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE noted that the proposed legislation would amend current statute to provide the option for school districts, the University of Alaska, and governmental units to participate in AlaskaCare. She explained that this would enable the state to negotiate a better cost of health care. She concluded that the benefits of consolidation would result in cost savings, expanded healthcare options, and reduced staff burden.

[9:02:33 AM](#)

RANDY TRANI, Superintendent, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, gave invited testimony and offered support for HB 21. He added that this has been on the school board's list of priorities for the last three years. He expressed the opinion that there is not a negative downside, as it provides potential for savings.

[9:04:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE summarized the sectional analysis [copy included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**Section 1.** Adds to powers of regional school boards the power to establish and maintain school district participation in a policy of group insurance, selected by the State of Alaska, that provides medical insurance.

**Section 2.** Adds to the duties of a regional school board the duty, when the board's school district participates in a policy of group insurance elected by the State of Alaska that provides medical insurance, to determine and disperse to district employees and administrative officers the amounts necessary to cover the district's portion of the cost of that participation.

**Section 3.** Allows the Commissioner of Administration to expend from the public education fund (AS 14.17.300) to the group health and life benefits fund (AS 39.30.095) a total of \$100,000,000 or less as needed to pay claims submitted by school district employees who are covered by a policy of self-insurance provided by the state; and, requires the Commissioner of Administration to repay the public education fund, over a period of 10 years, the full amount of the commissioner's expenditures from the public education fund.

**Section 4.** (a) Allows school districts to participate in a policy of insurance that provides medical insurance coverage to state employees and to school district employees. (b) Requires participating school districts to contribute to the group health and life

benefits fund (AS 39.30.095) based on rates set by the commissioner of administration. (c) Requires participating school districts to reimburse the state for procuring excess loss insurance if the state provides insurance benefits to school district employees under a policy of self-insurance. (d) Requires participating school districts to reimburse, over a period not to exceed 10 years, the department of administration's cost of paying insurance claims by school district employees for the first four months school district employees are covered by a policy of self-insurance provided by the state of Alaska. (e) Allows a participating school district to require its employees to pay some or all of the money that this bill section would require the school district to pay to the state. (f) Defines "school employee" and "school employer" for purposes of the bill section.

**Section 5.** Allows the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska to establish and maintain university participation in a policy of group insurance, selected by the State of Alaska, that provides medical insurance for university employees.

**Section 6.** Clarifies that when an employee of a participating governmental unit is covered by a group insurance policy obtained by the Department of Administration the employee spouse and dependent children are also covered.

**Section 7.** Adds to the University of Alaska to the definition of governmental unit applicable to section 6 of the bill.

**Section 8.** Add the definition of school district to AS 39.30.090, which is amended by section 6 and 7 of the bill.

**Section 9.** Authorizes the Department of Administration to provide group medical care insurance coverage to school district employees and employees of other governmental unit by means of self-insurance.

**Section 10.** Requires the Department of Administration to procure excess loss insurance in connection with providing group medical insurance coverage to employees of governmental units other than the state,

and allows the department to allocate the cost with the excess loss insurance across all of those governmental units.

**Section 11.** Make sections 1- 8 and section 10 of the bill applicable to collective bargaining agreements and other contracts that become legally binding on or after the effective date of those bill sections.

**Section 12.** Require certain self-insured school districts to transfer the closing balance of their self-funded insurance reserve account soon after they enroll in a health care plan administered by the state, and requires that when transferred by a school district these amounts will be applied to offset reimbursements owed by that school district under AS 14.20.127(d), a provision proposed in section 4 the bill.

**Section 13.** Authorizes the commissioner of administration to adopt regulations necessary to implement the changes made by the bill, to take effect on or after the effective date of the changes made by the bill.

**Section 14.** Make sections 12 and 13 of the bill effective immediately, subject to the restrictions set forth in those bill sections.

**Section 15.** Makes the bill's provisions effective date July 1, 2024, except as provided in bill section 14.

[9:08:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY questioned how many districts would be interested in this option.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE replied that her office had emailed every school district, but she does not have a definitive number at this point.

[9:10:11 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE, in response to Co-Chair Ruffridge, stated that the fiscal notes had just been received, and they will be forwarded to the committee as soon as possible.

[9:11:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked if governmental units other than the state are not allowed to participate in the state's AlaskaCare health plan.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE confirmed that is correct.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX observed that it is a "one-sided agreement," as there is no mention of underwriting standards; therefore, he expressed the understanding that the state's employee insurance plan would be required to accept other groups.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE deferred the question to Betsey Wood.

[9:12:36 AM](#)

BETSY WOOD, Acting Chief Health Administrator, Division of Retirement and Benefits, Department of Administration, explained that the proposed bill would require the Department of Administration to accept any governmental unit or school district that wanted to participate.

[9:15:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked how the \$7 million is calculated.

DR. TRANI explained that the calculation is the premium paid, plus the premium of AlaskaCare, and this is multiplied times the number of employees. He added that this number is based off a calculation from several years ago and premiums change frequently; therefore, he expressed uncertainty concerning any current savings. He noted that the average premium is currently between \$28 thousand and \$30 thousand per year per employee.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT requested that the current numbers be forwarded to the committee.

[9:16:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE expressed surprise concerning the cost of premiums. He questioned whether the cost included the employee's family.

DR. TRANI confirmed the cost is for family coverage. He added that there are several different plans for employees to choose from.

[9:18:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX questioned whether actuarial standards change when working with big insurance companies. He referenced [the Affordable Care Act] in relation to offering incentives.

MS. WOOD responded that to get a better sense of longer-range impacts this type of actuarial analysis is done when a proposed bill approaches the finance committee.

[9:20:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY pointed out the 2021 study regarding the university system joining AlaskaCare. She questioned whether costs were affected by this.

MS. WOOD expressed the understanding that there was minor, but not significant savings. She stated she will follow up with this information.

[9:22:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX commented that the legislature needs to look at this very carefully, and he shared an experience with insurance policies and the costs involved.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE remarked that the proposed legislation would allow the option for universities and schools to choose from the best option for individual units. She stated that the overall goal is to ease the financial strain on school districts, so schools can focus on what matters most.

[9:24:29 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced HB 21 was held over.

[9:24:59 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.