

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 7, 2024

8:00 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

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S): THE NATION'S CHARTER REPORT CARD

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 236

"An Act relating to the duties of the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska; establishing the University of Alaska major maintenance and modernization fund; repealing the University of Alaska building fund; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 230

"An Act repealing the limit on the number of years of out-of-state school experience that may be substituted for in-state experience in teacher salary scales."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 236

SHORT TITLE: UA MAJOR MAINTEN. MODERNIZATION FUND

SPONSOR(s) : REPRESENTATIVE(s) STAPP

01/16/24 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/24
01/16/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/24 (H) EDC, FIN
02/07/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 230

SHORT TITLE: OUT-OF-STATE TCHG EXPERIENCE & SALARIES

SPONSOR(s) : REPRESENTATIVE(s) HIMSCHOOT

01/16/24 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/24
01/16/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/24 (H) EDC
02/07/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

PAUL E. PETERSON, PhD, Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of
Government;

Director

Program on Education Policy and Governance

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a PowerPoint, titled "The
Nation's Charter Report Card."

REPRESENTATIVE WILL STAPP

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced HB 236.

PAUL MENKE, Staff

Representative Will Stapp

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Stapp, prime
sponsor of HB 236, presented a PowerPoint, titled "HB 236: UA
Major Maintenance and Modernization Act."

CHAD HUTCHINSON, Director of State Relations

University of Alaska

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB
236.

LUKE FULP, Chief Financial Officer

University of Alaska System
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 236.

BARBARA ADAMS, Consultant
Adams Analytic Solutions
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony during the hearing on HB 230.

DAN POLTA, Superintendent of Schools
Denali Borough School District
Healy, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony during the hearing on HB 230.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:00:47 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR JUSTIN RUFFRIDGE called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Representatives Prax, McKay, and Ruffridge were present at the call to order. Representatives McCormick, Himschoot, Story, and Allard arrived as the meeting was in progress.

PRESENTATION(S): The Nation's Charter Report Card

[8:02:23 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the first order of business would be The Nation's Charter Report Card presentation.

[8:02:47 AM](#)

PAUL E. PETERSON, PhD, Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Government; Director, Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University, provided a brief introduction to the PowerPoint presentation of the Nation's Chart Report Card [hard copy included in the committee packet]. He explained that this was the first time this has been attempted and only recently, data on student performance has been collected by the U.S. Government. He walked the committee through some procedures used in terms of the report card.

[8:04:50 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON moved to the second slide, titled "National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

--The nation's report card
--Administered under the direction of the U. S. Department of Education.
Provides information on public student performance in math and reading every 2 years for representative samples of students in each state
Students tested in other subjects less frequently
Sampled school districts and charter schools expected to participate
Sample of students is smaller for charter than district students, as only 7% of all students attend charters

State proficiency tests administered to all students in every state, but each state designs its own tests, making cross-state comparisons questionable.

DR. PETERSON added there are not many high school charter schools; therefore, there are not many observations or information from which to draw conclusions on students in twelfth grade. He said the report card is different from any state mandated proficiency test, and the tests are very informative, but it is hard to make cross state comparisons because each state has its own tests. He stressed that this is not the state proficiency test.

[8:09:46 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON continued on slide 3, titled "Our Ranking is based upon:," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- 24 NAEP surveys: grade 4 and 8 math and reading (2009-2019)
- Approximately 145,730 tests for charter students
 - (2,430 Alaska charter students). •
- NAEP is representative by state and for the country as a whole

DR. PETERSON emphasized that 2,430 [Alaska charter students] is a reasonable number to be working with.

[8:11:21 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON moved to slide 4, titled "Results adjusted for student background," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Adjustments made for students' ethnicity, gender, free and reduced-price lunch status, locale, special education, English Language Learner status, age on February 1 of testing year, computer availability in the home, the number of books in the home, and levels of parental education (only for grade 8)
- Also, we standardized scores within years, subject, and grades and for age of charter school

DR. PETERSON pointed out that quite a bit of information is taken into account leading to the most accurate estimate of how well that state is doing relative to other states.

[8:12:58 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON moved to slide 5, titled "Ranking and interpretation." He briefly explained the numbers on the slide, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- State ranks based on the adjusted scores for charter students from 2009 to 2019 as compared to the scores of charter students nationwide.
- Rankings do not compare charters to district schools within a state; instead they compare charter schools in one state to those in other states.
- Measure is in standard deviations (sd)
- 0.31 standard deviations equals one years' worth of learning
- 1.04sd equals four years of learning (difference between 4th and 8th grade scores on same test).

DR. PETERSON added that for simplicity's sake, he would speak in terms of years of learning.

[8:14:15 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON proceeded to slide 6, titled "Limitations." He elucidated each point on the slide, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- We are not able to track year-by-year trends in charter student performance within states (too few observations)
- We have no information on student performance at virtual charters (excluded in NAEP)
- Only 4th and 8th grade data. No information on high school (insufficient observations).
- Data end in 2019, before Covid pandemic

[8:15:06 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON continued to slide 7, titled "Ranking states by charter performance," which featured a graph showing states above and below national average. He noted that the top ones look as might be expected, but the bottom ones are "off" because of what the schools are teaching, such as Indigenous languages, using Hawai'i as an example.

[8:18:25 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON moved to slide 8, titled "Charter school ranking weakly related to ranking of all public schools." The slide showed charter school rank versus public school rank, and he noted that Alaska is "very unusual" and ranked very low overall. He proceeded to slide 9, titled "Ranking of states on raw 4th and 8th grade performances of charter students on NAEP, 2009-2019," where he pointed out that Alaska comes in seventh, which he said is not bad, but other states have higher performing charter schools. He said the comparisons are done with fairness in mind, but he noted some states have a charter sector that is serving an advantaged population.

[8:21:25 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON proceeded to slides 10 and 11, titled "Ranking of states on adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of charter students in math" and "Ranking of states on adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of charter students in reading." He pointed out that Alaska is shown at the top in math and third in reading.

[8:22:35 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON moved to slide 12, titled "Ranking of states on adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of lower-income charter students." He added that these students are eligible for free and reduced lunch and Alaska "looked good," he said. On slide

13, titled "Ranking of states on adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of higher-income charter households," he pointed out that Alaska ranks third here, which is good, but not at the top. He proceeded to slide 14, titled "Ranking of states on adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of white charter students, 2009-2019," which showed Alaska came in third, and he noted that it is good but not as good as Washington, D.C., which has a very large charter sector that serves many different races.

[8:24:21 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON moved to slide 15, titled "Ranking of states on average adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of charter students tested in cities," and he emphasized that Alaska came in first place. He said many charter students are urban students, being that is where many schools are located. He continued on to slide 16, titled "Ranking of states on adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of charter students tested in suburbs, towns, and rural areas." He reiterated that these areas had to be combined all together in order to have enough general observations, and that Alaska came in first place.

[8:25:19 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON proceeded to slides 17 and 18, titled "Ranking of states on adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of boys at charter schools," and "Ranking of states on adjusted 4th and 8th grade performances of girls at charter schools." He noted that the boys and girls do very well in Alaska compared to other states.

[8:25:44 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON moved to slide 19, titled "Additional findings," and expounded each point. The slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Charters authorized by state agencies (board or department) outperform charters authorized by other entities
- Charters authorized by higher education institutions show lower performances
- Standalone and for-profit charters do not perform as well as those in nonprofit charter school networks.

- Specialized charters outperform those with generic objectives
- No effects of funding level, or the percentage of charter students in state

[8:30:23 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE invited questions from the committee.

[8:30:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY referred to the report [included in the committee packet] on page 29 in reference to charter authorizers.

DR. PETERSON replied they [the data] can only show that students perform better if they attend charter schools that have been authorized by a statewide agency.

[8:33:12 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD reminded everyone the superintendents are present and that she appreciated the data numbers. She said that she noticed reasons were not pinpointed throughout Mr. Peterson's presentation as to why Alaska charter schools have been so successful. She asked Mr. Peterson if he could pinpoint "what we are doing right."

DR. PETERSON said one reason he speculated was that Alaska had experiences with young people learning in many different circumstances. He also noted many people in Alaska were educated by corresponding, and he opined that these unique experiences may have helped Alaska.

[8:36:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT said she heard a lot of correlation but not causation in the study, and asked Dr. Peterson if he could make a study to find the causation of Alaska's high achievements.

DR. PETERSON said if the data could reach causal conclusions, he would "jump at it." He said scientific work can only be done if it is something you can stand behind if you have the information, and the government collects a limited amount of

information about the country's educational system - and that holds more true in the charter sector.

[8:39:46 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE added to Representative Himschoot's question regarding correlation and causation. If the body requested some data set to allow causation to be studied, he asked DR. PETERSON, as a person in his position, what the data pieces would be.

DR. PETERSON replied that charter schools have given people the opportunity to do causal analysis. If a charter school is oversubscribed, it must admit students with a lottery. He explained that academics love lotteries because they can then use the data to say what happened to the students who did or did not win the lottery. He gave examples of some eastern states' lottery systems.

[8:43:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT referred to Dr. Peterson's study on page 2 [included in the committee packet] and asked whether regulatory policies need to be changed.

[8:45:29 AM](#)

DR. PETERSON explained that state rankings done up until his study are that the studies were not really based on whether or not students were learning at the charter schools. He opined that charter schools should be ranked on how much students are learning, also taking into account other important aspects of their lives.

[8:48:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK brought up Dr. Peterson's research for performance and offered his belief that there are only two charter schools in all the Bush areas in Alaska.

DR. PETERSON replied that the main way the research factors in is to compare students with similar students. He stated that he could not say anything about the proper distribution of students throughout Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK questioned whether it is detrimental for students to learn in their Native language.

DR. PETERSON gave an example of immersion schools in Hawai'i and those left out were the Indigenous community who had many problems adapting to the Twenty-First Century world that was created. They were told they must learn in English and give up their language, and when charter schools "came down the pipe" it was the same time as the Hawaiian renaissance, leading to charter schools being the place to see whether immersions may work for this population. He said he had nothing but admiration for these institutions and there is no reason to discontinue these immersion schools.

[8:54:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY commented that sometimes one can deduce what happens from data. He observed that charter schools are focused on reading and math, and he opined public schools should be too, to bring scores up. He offered his belief that there is no need to wait for further studies.

[8:56:23 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE reflected on slide 8 and asked Dr. Peterson if he could bring anything to the committee linking school choice legislation and states.

DR. PETERSON responded that although he expected to have a clear answer when he began the study, he did not have the answer currently. He said what he had learned from other data is that a charter school should have a clear mission on what is essential.

[9:00:45 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE referred to subsets on data by individual characteristics, and asked Dr. Peterson whether part of the data set included people with intensive or special needs.

DR. PETERSON related that he had an autistic son; therefore, it was a heartfelt topic. He said special needs are taken into account as part of the analysis, but he could not tell whether Alaska schools are particularly good at serving those with special needs.

[9:02:11 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD emphasized her agreement with Representative McKay's comment about educators needing to focus on the "three Rs," [reading, writing, and arithmetic].

[9:03:30 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE thanked Dr. Peterson for presenting the data and answering questions from committee members.

[9:03:56 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:03 a.m. to 9:09 a.m.

HB 236-UA MAJOR MAINTEN. MODERNIZATION FUND

[9:09:14 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 236, "An Act relating to the duties of the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska; establishing the University of Alaska major maintenance and modernization fund; repealing the University of Alaska building fund; and providing for an effective date."

[9:10:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILL STAPP, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 236, and paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

As of this year, the University of Alaska (UA) system has an estimated \$1.4 billion in backlogged deferred maintenance projects. 40% of state buildings belong to the university, and university-affiliated members across our state are hindered while working, studying, and living in facilities and dormitories that have fallen into disrepair. Without a clear fiscal vision and framework, the \$1.4 billion backlog will only continue to grow, and our university system will suffer.

HB 236 will solve this problem by establishing a major maintenance and modernization fund. With this fund, the Board of Regents will be able to leverage state funding to create a clear, concise plan for reducing the UA system's deferred maintenance backlog. This

bill intends to bring UA long-term financial stability that will signify the State of Alaska's investment for its students and higher education institutions.

Deferred maintenance is an ongoing cost, not a one-time payment. The University of Alaska building fund exists in the state's budget but has not been consistently funded, which led to an unreliable funding stream which the UA system could not utilize to resolve its deferred maintenance backlog. To remedy this, HB 236 will establish a funding source that will be exclusively used for major maintenance and modernization projects. The future generations and workforces of our state must have the opportunity to thrive in safe, modern buildings that lead Alaskans north to the future.

[9:13:13 AM](#)

PAUL MENKE, Staff, Representative Will Stapp ,Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Stapp, prime sponsor of HB 236, began a PowerPoint [hardcopy included in the committee packet], titled "HB 236: UA Major Maintenance and Modernization Act." He proceeded to slide 2, titled "Problem," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:'

- ☐ UA System has an extensive Deferred Maintenance (DM) backlog
 - ☐ 40% of Alaska state buildings are university-owned
 - ☐ 68% of Alaska's DM backlog is in the UA system
- ☐ Currently no clear fiscal plan for catching up on deferred maintenance projects

MR. MENKE added that projects within the university system are capital projects which require individual appropriations, and it is not conducive to creating a predictable source of funding for the university to catch up on its deferred maintenance backlog.

[9:14:02 AM](#)

MR. MENKE moved to slide 3, titled "Map of UA System," showing a visual representation of the state's main and satellite campuses. The deferred maintenance backlog is spread across almost all campuses throughout Alaska, and HB 236 has a solution for reducing the expensive backlog and making the university system more marketable, he said.

[9:14:31 AM](#)

MR. MENKE moved to slide 4, titled "HB 236's Solution:," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- ☐ Create a reliable fund that the UA system can use to catch up on deferred maintenance projects
- ☐ Ensure the fiscally responsible expenditure of funds being used for deferred maintenance projects
- ☐ Maintain respect for legislative constitutional appropriation authority

[9:15:07 AM](#)

MR. MENKE gave the section analysis for HB 236 shown on slides 5 through 7, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1: - Adds the duty for the Board of Regents to develop a comprehensive plan for applicable projects to be funded from the UA Major Maintenance and Modernization Fund

Section 2: - Adds the duty for the Board of Regents to present a detailed, written report to the Alaska Legislature within the first 30 days of each regular session about current and proposed major maintenance and modernization project.

Section 3: - Defines "major maintenance and modernization project"

Section 4: - Creates the UA Major Maintenance and Modernization Fund which will consist of: - Appropriations from the legislature - Transfers from the Board of Regents - Interest and investment income - Donations - Establishes procedures in the event that the legislature disapproves of a proposed project - States the intent of the legislature to appropriate \$35,000,000 /year - Defines: - "Board of Regents" - "Fund" - "Major Maintenance and Modernization Project"

Section 5: - Repeals the UA Building Fund (AS 37.05.555)

Section 6: - Outlines current projects that the Board of Regents can leverage funds from the UA Major Maintenance and Modernization Fund without further appropriation

Section 7: - Provides for an immediate effective date

[9:16:48 AM](#)

MR. MENKE moved to slide 8, titled "Projects Approved in HB 236 (Section 6)." The slide showed the improvements needed to all three major universities and a list of all the projects contained in the bill. He reminded committee members they have additional attachments in their committee packets.

[9:18:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX brought up the report to the legislature as opposed to just letting regions "do their business." He said the legislature does not know about deferred maintenance, and he asked, "Why the legislature?"

REPRESENTATIVE STAPP replied that the legislature is the accountability body and controls the appropriations. He added that the legislature, being the approving body, seemed to be the most effective way to have resources attributed.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether the legislature needed to come up with a definition to establish deferred maintenance.

REPRESENTATIVE STAPP responded there were people online who would explain more in depth.

[9:21:31 AM](#)

CHAD HUTCHINSON, Director of State Relations, University of Alaska (UA), explained the definition of deferred maintenance and how it associated with the age of the building, the amount of construction work needed, as well as being prioritized by student use and both electrical and mechanical issues.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX opined that there are necessary compliance needs, and improvements are not maintenance.

MR. HUTCHINSON said that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance is a component of UA's focus, but the

predominant focus is out-of-date mechanical equipment, leaking fuel tanks, and insufficient electrical systems. He said UA's hope is to become more self-sufficient and less dependent on state dollars.

[9:24:01 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked how much [money] is in deferred maintenance.

MR. HUTCHINSON answered that it is approaching 1.48 billion. He added that the top three projects are at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). He also spoke to the amount of wear and tear, such as roofing issues, at the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) due to weather conditions. He noted that the governor has had conversations with UA's president, Pat Pitney, regarding creative solutions for sustained funding.

[9:26:37 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD expressed her frustration at the university not "maintaining its home," and now pleading with the legislature for "all this money" now and each year thereafter. She gave an example wherein she had dereliction of duty and not maintained her home but expected insurance to cover the damages.

MR. HUTCHINSON referred to the 1.5 billion dollars and the "red book" on page 56 that showed a chart, and the lack of capital appropriations over the years.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD interjected Mr. Hutchinson and opined that what he began stating is just an excuse and it was alarming that UA's finances have not been figured out. She questioned what UA's capital budget money went to.

REPRESENTATIVE STAPP suggested to think about who appropriated the money in the first place, which was the state, having a constitutional obligation to the university system. He further explained that the university gets its money through various entities and the budget is transparent as to where those funds actually go.

[9:30:12 AM](#)

LUKE FULP, Chief Financial Officer, University of Alaska System, explained that the deferred maintenance priority had been a top capital priority for the Board of Regents for the last 20 years,

with most recently a \$50-million request before the legislature every year with a specific slate of projects. He added that UA had adjusted its approach, and now comes with a request for \$35 million, which he stated was "a modest request." He said UA is a very large system with many facilities within. He stressed that UA is not just looking to the legislature to "solve the problem" for it but has designed a plan to use its own funds to contribute starting in 2028. If HB 236 were enacted, UA would pay \$10 million per year and receive \$35 million per year from the legislature.

[9:35:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked how the Board of Regents and the president [of UA] have been involved, as well as the involvement at the legislative level.

REPRESENTATIVE STAPP said there is a lot of technical thought to unwind the problem. He said that outside of state appropriation, the primary purpose is tuition. He gave an example of a maintenance backlog and the possibility of then raising tuition; however, if that type of policy were enacted to solve the problem, it incentivizes Alaska children to pursue education elsewhere for more reasonable tuition. He said deferred maintenance is a problem that has gotten progressively worse, and in turn gets progressively more expensive over time. He said the concept behind HB 236 is to make the velocity of money more efficient so it can go further.

[9:39:25 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE referred to page 5 of the bill and that he was seeing prescribed language referencing specific places and things. He asked if someone could speak to the specific language.

MR. MENKE replied the specific language built into the bill is based off of the capital projects that UA had requested and is designed that if the bill were passed, these projects in Section 6 would be the projects that the Board of Regents would be allowed to use funds for.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE commented about a possible statutory process to alter the bill and asked whether there would be a simpler way or a potential change that may need to be made 20 years down the road.

MR. MENKE replied that he did not see a simpler way. If there were new projects that came up, a similar process would be needed, and he opined that the proposed way is a more streamlined way.

[9:41:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT commented that the bill looked like a creative solution to a very real problem, and she supported it. She added that it was important to recognize the state's K-12 system lacks the same opportunities UA has to meet its own needs.

[9:42:37 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX advised that the proposed legislation must be evaluated carefully, and he noted that modernization is not maintenance.

REPRESENTATIVE STAPP stated that he agreed; however, when looking at building operations it is wise to look at replacement costs and modernizing systems to reduce overall operation costs.

[9:44:32 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that HB 236 was held over.

[9:44:49 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:44 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

HB 230-OUT-OF-STATE TCHG EXPERIENCE & SALARIES

[9:45:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 230, "An Act repealing the limit on the number of years of out-of-state school experience that may be substituted for in-state experience in teacher salary scales."

[9:46:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT, as prime sponsor, presented HB 230. She explained she had a multitude of goals for HB 230, and paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

HB 230, OUT-OF STATE TCHG EXPERIENCE & SALARIES is a single line bill that repeals the existing limit on the number of years of teaching experience gained outside the state that can be used to determine a teacher's salary. This bill will help address our teacher shortage and bring in more experienced teachers from out-of-state.

Teachers are currently only allowed to count eight years of out-of-state teaching experience, if they have a masters' degree, and six years of out-of-state teaching experience, if they have bachelors' degree, for the purpose of determining the correct placement on a district's salary scale, even if they taught out of state for much longer. Repealing this limit is one of the recommendations from the "2021 Teacher Retention and Recruitment Action Plan," the plan is a product of the Alaska Governor's working group on teacher retention and recruitment that was established in 2020.

Districts across Alaska are having an extremely difficult time filling teaching positions. First day teacher vacancies in Alaska have increased from about 155 in 2019 to about 394 in 2022 according to the Department of Education and Early Development and this shortage impacts both urban and rural districts. With the passage of this bill, state statute will no longer inhibit districts from hiring the most experienced out-of-state candidates, and in turn teachers will be fairly compensated for their experience.

[9:48:30 AM](#)

BARBARA ADAMS, Consultant, Adams Analytic Solutions, provided a brief background and related that she started work on teacher retention and recruitment in 2020. She explained that HB 230 would remove the criteria put on districts so they can be more flexible while trying to recruit teachers. She clarified that the action plan [in the playbook] could be provided to the committee.

[9:50:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked for examples in the working group as to why its members felt it was an important statute change.

MS. ADAMS replied there is a superintendent available who could better speak to that.

[9:51:20 AM](#)

DAN POLTA, Superintendent of Schools, Denali Borough School District, provided his educational background and shared a story about interviewing a U.S. teacher candidate who was American educated but working in international schools. Because of the statute, he said, he could only offer a limited contract and could not legally offer the candidate a better placement. He added that the candidate had to regretfully turn down the position.

[9:55:02 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE invited closing comments on HB 230.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT opined that "we could do good things with this bill," and offered to talk offline as well.

[9:55:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY expressed what he considered troubling, in that the principal of Sand Lake [Anchorage, Alaska] informed him that he puts out job ads for elementary teachers and gets many applications from the Philippines. He noted that the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) still does not have its accreditation for teaching certificates, and he suggested that the legislature should "do a dive into the problem" and find out why.

[9:57:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY thanked Representative McKay for bringing his experience up but stated her understanding was that UAA could work with the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) because it could certify teachers.

[9:58:09 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE stated that time could be specifically dedicated to a UA discussion at a later date.

[HB 230 was held over.]

[9:58:51 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m.