

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 13, 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**

HOUSE BILL NO. 55

"An Act relating to allocations of funding for the Alaska Workforce Investment Board; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 274

"An Act relating to screening reading deficiencies and providing reading intervention services to public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through three."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 55

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND WORKFORCE INVEST BOARD ALLOCATIONS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) CARRICK

02/01/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/01/23	(H)	EDC, L&C, FIN
01/31/24	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
01/31/24	(H)	Heard & Held
01/31/24	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/12/24	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

02/12/24 (H) Heard & Held  
02/12/24 (H) MINUTE (EDC)  
02/14/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106  
02/14/24 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard  
03/13/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 274

SHORT TITLE: SCREENING/READING INTERVENTION K-3

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/18/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/18/24 (H) EDC, FIN  
03/13/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

CATHY MUNOZ, Acting Commissioner  
Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Explained committee substitute (CS) for HB 55, Version R.

PALOMA HARBOUR, Director  
Division of Employment and Training Services  
Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony during the hearing on HB 55.

CATHY LECOMPTE, Director  
Division of Alaska Vocational Technical Center  
Department of Labor & Workforce Development  
Seward, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a PowerPoint, titled "Alaska Vocational Technical Center Update," during the hearing on HB 55.

DIRK CRAFT, Executive Director  
Alaska Workforce Investment Board  
Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony during the hearing on HB 55.

THOMAS LANCE, President  
Alaska Research Consortium  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HB 55.

DON ETHERIDGE, Lobbyist  
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial  
Organizations  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony during the hearing  
on HB 55.

DEENA BISHOP, Commissioner  
Department of Education and Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Introduced HB 274 on behalf of the bill  
sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor.

LAUREL SHOOP, Legislative Liaison  
Department of Education and Early Development  
Office of the Commissioner  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave the sectional analysis for HB 274 on  
behalf of the bill sponsor, House Rules by request of the  
governor.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:00:14 AM](#)

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

#### **HB 55-EXTEND WORKFORCE INVEST BOARD ALLOCATIONS**

[8:01:09 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the first order of business would  
be HOUSE BILL NO. 55, "An Act relating to allocations of funding  
for the Alaska Workforce Investment Board; and providing for an  
effective date."

[8:01:36 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt the proposed committee  
substitute (CS) for HB 55, Version 33-LS0360\R, A. Radford,  
2/13/24, as the working document.

[8:01:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX objected.

[8:01:49 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD invited Acting Commissioner Munoz to explain Version R. She clarified that Acting Commissioner Munoz would present neutrally.

[8:02:48 AM](#)

CATHY MUNOZ, Acting Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD), explained the committee substitute (CS) for HB 55, Version R. She summarized the Alaska Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP), and briefly explained TVEP funding. She stated that the Version R would change the allocation from .16 to .25 and would generate approximately \$10 million additional funding in the coming year. In Section 2, she said, the program is extended to 2026 from 2024 and a new destination is added to the new recipient, among other small changes.

[8:05:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX questioned whether the allocation was being increased by approximately 40 percent.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ confirmed and reiterated that the funding would be increased by roughly \$10 million. In response to a follow-up question, she relayed that a legislative audit showed that approximately 8,800 people would benefit from the program.

[8:06:57 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE, in reference to the "flow of dollars," questioned if it is happening at the level that it should. He asked whether the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) is capable of handling increased grant requests.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ replied that AWIB oversees the State Training and Employment Program (STEP), which is funded through the same source of revenue, and she added that it is capable of handling a competitive grant program through TVEP.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE asked whether the increase in the amount of 2.25 would be solvent.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ replied that currently, the balance of the unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund is \$650 million.

[8:09:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Acting Commissioner Munoz to explain how the new program would work and whether grants would be authorized for other post-secondary institutions.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ replied the job centers provide individual training support through federal and state funding and that funds would go out to training providers throughout the state, not just the main recipients on the list.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY sought more explanation regarding distribution to individual grants and institutions.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ replied it would go to the individual and their choice of institution; for example, if they chose to go to a training in Palmer, an individual grant would be paid to that institution.

[8:11:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked whether Version R was written in line with the recommendations in the audit.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ recommended the question be directed to the auditor.

[8:13:30 AM](#)

PALOMA HARBOUR, Director, Division of Employment and Training Services, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, answered questions during the hearing on HB 55 and noted that she would speak to the way the program works. She said grants are given to individuals who come through the job center looking for employment and training. She said the grants can support their training costs, housing, and transportation.

[8:14:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there is an advisory board that evaluates the program.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ replied that AWIB regularly updates the high demand jobs and where training support needs to be targeted.

[8:15:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE, in reference to the audit, asked Acting Commissioner Munoz if she was confident that the named recipients were accomplishing their goal of providing the service at a level high enough to maintain their percentages.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ said the University of Alaska (UA) does a fantastic job at directing TVEP money towards vocational training, but she could not speak to some of the smaller schools and would defer to the director on that question. She emphasized the effectiveness of the program and noted that many Alaskans are receiving training through these funds.

[8:16:50 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD referenced funds not being distributed equally amongst the state, and that Version R would be able to "designate out" to the labor centers.

[8:17:36 AM](#)

CATHY LECOMPTE, Director, Division of Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC), gave a PowerPoint, titled "Alaska Vocational Technical Center Update" [hard copy included in the committee packet] during the hearing on HB 55, and began by providing an update on the division as shown on slides 2 and 3, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Residential training center located in Seward, Alaska
- Nationally accredited
- Student Success
  - 90% Completion
  - 90% Employment
  - Little to no student loan debt

[8:21:07 AM](#)

MS. LECOMPTE noted slide 4, titled "AVTEC Serves a Statewide Mission," showing a pie chart with a breakdown of student participation from all economic regions and slide 5, titled "The

AVTEC Experience," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Workplace simulation
- Crosscutting technical and employability skills
- Life Skills and employment assistance
- Clock hours, not credit hours

MS. LECOMPTE added that the students have a broad choice of industries to choose from once they have completed their training.

[8:23:22 AM](#)

MS. LECOMPTE continued on slides 6 through 8, titled "AVTEC Training Programs," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Alaska Maritime Training Center
  - United States Coast Guard
  - In-person and online
  - Introduction to Nautical Skills for high schools
- Alaska Culinary Academy
  - Basic Culinary skills training
- Applied Technologies
  - Diesel Heavy Equipment Technology
  - Industrial Welding
- Business and Office Technology
  - Accounting Technician
  - Administrative Office Assistant
  - Medical Office Assistant
  - Networking Technician
  - Office Assistant
- Energy and Building Trades
  - Construction Technology
  - Industrial Electricity
  - Plumbing & Heating
  - Refrigeration

[8:26:32 AM](#)

MS. LECOMPTE proceeded to slide 9, titled "Other Workforce Training at AVTEC," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Apprenticeships
  - Related Technical Instruction
  - IT Apprenticeship
- Senior Year to Career
- Customized Training
  - Residential Building and Maintenance

MS. LECOMPTE moved to slide 10, titled "AVTEC-Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP) Funds," which showed an illustration of the impact of the funds, to which TVEP funds comprise 17 percent of the overall AVTEC budget. She continued on slide 11, titled "TVEP Allocations," and drew attention to the last column, titled "Investment Per Participant," that she referred to as a "great return on investment." She concluded on slide 11, titled "AVTEC Students Work in Priority Industries," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Alternative & Renewable Energy
- Construction
- Education
- Fisheries, Seafood & Maritime
- Healthcare • Information Technology
- Mining, Oil & Gas
- Service Industry
- Transportation

MS. LECOMPTE reiterated that training is provided to Alaskans to choose the industry they wish to get into for their careers. She welcomed questions from committee members.

[8:29:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked Ms. Lecompte whether someone does outreach to the industries she serves.

MS. LECOMPTE confirmed that a staff of individuals reach out to industry partners as well as high schools through their college and career fairs.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX referred to slide 10, noting the "other" category on the pie chart and asked whether it was industry funding.

MS. LECOMPTE explained that "other" is interagency agreements.

[8:31:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY referred to the budget on page 10 and inquired what impact losing 2 percent of TVEP funds would have.

MS. LECOMPTE responded that TVEP may lose approximately \$2.3 million out of the budget, which may result in discontinuing some of the programming offered.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ added that if Version R were adopted, then the overall allocation would increase because the designation goes from .16 to .25.

[8:33:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT reflected on slide 5 and asked for an outline of the ratio of mental health counselors and career guides to the number of students served.

MS. LECOMPTE replied there are two counselors dedicated to providing mental health support, and there is a ratio of about 1 to 75. In addition, she said, there is a career counselor.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT referred to slide 11 and the "value we are getting" for AVTEC, but she voiced her concern about the Amundsen Educational Center program with an investment per participant of \$54,820.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ deferred to the director of AWIB.

[8:37:00 AM](#)

DIRK CRAFT, Executive Director, Alaska Workforce Investment Board, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, replied to Representative Himschoot and explained that the reporting requirements are laid out in statute and are all formula funded. He stated that he could not speak to the specific institution.

[8:38:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked what Amundsen Educational Center focused on.

MR. CRAFT noted that it was formerly New Frontier Vocational Technical Center and focuses on training rural Alaskans for entry-level positions.

[8:39:44 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE asked whether the AWIB board ever withheld the 20 percent from any of the programs since the previous audit.

MR. CRAFT responded to his knowledge, no.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE [asked a question in reference to Section 5 of HB 55, Version R, which would amend AS 23.15.835(h) in terms of an institution's failure to comply with certain subsections of Title 23, including subsection (e), which lists requirements of an expenditure and performance report]. He asked Mr. Craft whether there were any programs that did not follow the items "listed out in [subsection] (e)" or whether most programs follow that to the letter of the law.

MR. CRAFT responded that the items in subsection (e) are reporting requirements, and the information has been returned to the research and analysis department to put into the annual report.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE referred to the audit on the job and wage information as a requirement and observed that the requirement has not been removed in Version R. He asked whether it was a requirement that should be removed or something the department would add at some point going forward.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ opined that it is a requirement she would like to see as part of the annual reporting, and it could be included in Version R.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE stated that it is currently a statutory reporting requirement but expressed concern that none of these programs in the next year would receive funds due to not being able to do the things currently in statute.

[8:43:25 AM](#)

MR. CRAFT asked Co-chair Ruffridge to rephrase his question.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE read from the aforementioned subsection (e) and explained that he was trying to find clarity as to how the

items in statute would be accomplished unless DLWD or the AWID board were involved in the reporting.

MR. CRAFT, in reference to the reporting requirements listed out in the aforementioned section, explained that AWIB manages 7 of the 10 TVEP recipients which involves processing reimbursements for the programs, but AWIB does not do direct monitoring of those programs.

[8:46:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE expressed uncertainly how the requirements of [paragraphs] (1) through (3) could be accomplished without assistance from the department. He noted that grantees are struggling to accomplish things and performance metrics are lacking.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ said there is access to wage data through the Employment Security Tax division. She stated she would find out how it would work and added that it could be connected in terms of performance measures.

[8:48:20 AM](#)

THOMAS LANCE, President, Alaska Research Consortium (ARC), gave invited testimony in support of HB 55 and provided a background of the Alaska Research Consortium and added that it collaborates with public and private entities including AVTEC. He read from Alaska Statutes Title 16, Chapter 52. He encouraged the passing of HB 55 and to reauthorize TVEP to support the state's workforce.

[8:51:03 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 8:51 a.m.

[8:51:29 AM](#)

DON ETHERIDGE, Lobbyist, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL/CIO), gave invited testimony during the hearing on HB 55. He offered his belief that the STEP program should be expanded and stated that he supported TVEP expansion. In reference to the \$10 million increase, he said he did not have a problem with a modest increase, but "we need to keep a close eye on it."

[8:54:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Mr. Etheridge to elaborate on competitive programs.

MR. ETHERIDGE replied that the original intent was to make it a grant system, but it changed when it went through the process.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether the intention was to go to post-secondary training institutions or to individual grants.

MR. ETHERIDGE said the original idea was to go out to different nonprofit training groups so they could bring in the funds that are hard for them to come up with.

[8:55:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Mr. Etheridge if he was aware of any vocation or career technical education centers opened in the last 20 years since the program was created.

MR. ETHERIDGE stated that he was not aware.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Mr. Etheridge whether he had heard of the Prince of Wales Vocational and Technical Education Center.

MR. ETHERIDGE responded that he had but did not follow what the program was doing.

[8:56:42 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked Mr. Etheridge whether he knew that the Alaska Job Center Network has added 7 percent.

MR. ETHERIDGE expressed his belief that it should be under STEP.

[8:57:23 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 8:57 a.m.

[8:58:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY questioned that the bill stated that the money is supposed to go to institutions that are doing post-secondary or vocational education, and when she thought of the Alaska Job Center Network, she did not think of it as an

institution that is putting together programs, and she pointed out that the money is supposed to help support programs.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ responded that she did not think the job centers are institutions but the ability exists to provide direct training support through the job centers.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY observed that by statute, the money should be going to institutions; therefore, she was hesitant to accept Version R.

ACTING COMMISSIONER MUNOZ suggested there could be an amendment added to clarify things.

[9:01:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX removed his objection to the motion to adopt Version R.

[9:01:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY objected.

[9:01:30 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:01 a.m. to 9:02 a.m.

[9:02:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY removed her objection.

[9:02:48 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced her intention to hold over HB 55.

[9:03:09 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 9:03 a.m.

[9:03:48 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced there being no further objection, Version R to HB 55 was adopted as the working document.

[HB 55 was held over.]

[9:04:22 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:04 a.m. to 9:05 a.m.

**HB 274-SCREENING/READING INTERVENTION K-3**

[9:05:36 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 274, "An Act relating to screening reading deficiencies and providing reading intervention services to public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through three."

[9:06:03 AM](#)

DEENA BISHOP, Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development, introduced HB 274 on behalf of the bill sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor. She began a corresponding PowerPoint [hard copy included in the committee packet], titled "HB 274 Screening/Reading Intervention K-3 to Update the Alaska Reads Act." She stated that she would move through the slideshow fairly quickly and proceeded to slide 2 showing the Mission, Vision, and Purpose, and slide 3, titled "Alaska's Education Challenge, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Five Shared Strategic Priorities:

1. Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
2. Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
3. Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.
4. Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.
5. Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP noted the first point on the slide would be the context of today's discussion. Slide 4 featured an agenda,

and she stated she would have new information for the committee on Alaska Reads Act data.

[9:07:44 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked whether there would be a reading of the sectional analysis or the sponsor letter.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP confirmed that another staff member would be available to present.

[9:08:22 AM](#)

LAUREL SHOOP, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development, on behalf of the bill sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor, gave the sectional analysis for HB 274 [included in the committee packet] which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**Section 1:**

Amends AS 14.30.760 Statewide screening and support paragraph (a) by removing language that only required students in grades K-3 to take the statewide literacy screener once in the fall if they met the proficiency benchmark on the first try. By having all students take the screener three times a year educators and parents can track progress throughout the year. It also allows for progress monitoring to inform additional instruction to increase reading skills beyond just proficiency.

**Section 2:**

Amends AS 14.30.765 Reading intervention services and strategies; progression paragraph (f) by adjusting the date of the meeting between parents, the teacher, and other pertinent district staff to discuss whether a third-grade student is ready for grade four. The adjustment is from 45 days from the end of the school year to 15 days. By changing this timeframe, data from the third administration of the statewide literacy screener can be used in the conversation. This additional information allows the parents to make a more informed decision regarding their child's education and better reflects the overall learning levels of students at the end of the grade level.

[9:10:04 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP continued the presentation on slide 5, which featured acronyms, and she drew attention to two of them which she said she would refer to throughout the discussion: Beginning of Year (BOY), and Middle of Year (MOY). On slide 6, titled "Alaska Reads Act Overview," she shared there are four components, but one is actually required. She stated she would speak to the required component, "District Reading Improvement," adding that reporting/data collections is also required. She proceeded to slides 7 and 8, titled "Alaska Reads Act: District Reading Improvement," and explained that in the aforementioned required component that the bill speaks to, the two items to focus on are the literacy screener and progression. She expounded on the literacy screener shown on slide 8. She noted that on slide 9, titled "mCLASS DIBELS 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Statewide Literacy Screener," DIBELS 8 is the state assessment and is paid for through the Alaska Reads Act for all districts. She proceeded to slide 10, titled "Objectives for Data Review," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Determine which districts/schools/classrooms need additional support
- Analyze Beginning of Year (BOY) & Middle of Year (MOY) data to understand trends and needs for the remainder of the school year
- Consider adjustments to systems/plans that need to be addressed

[9:13:28 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP moved to slide 11, titled "mCLASS DIBELS 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Literacy Screener Components," which featured different kinds of screeners that students receive. Slide 12 featured literacy screener assessment risk categories, which shared how students are reported after taking assessments. She continued to slide 13, which shared completion rates of students who have taken MOY data. Slides 14 and 15, she said, featured BOY and MOY compared data. She noted the bar chart featuring MOY shows it has moved in the right direction. Slide 15, she said, showed who makes up what category by grade. She said regarding the expectation of a child and what they know, MOY is more than the expectation in the beginning; therefore, these are "moving assessments." She noted that Alaska, compared to the rest of the nation, is still behind but not "out of the ballpark."

[9:18:37 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said that on slides 17 and 18, titled "Correlation Report: mCLASS DIBELS 8<sup>th</sup> Edition Beginning of the year (BOY) - Middle of the Year (MOY)," the question is once students assess, where do they go, which she stressed is key to understanding learning.

[9:21:36 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP reiterated that the assessments are minimal. She noted the progression piece featured on slide 19, titled "Alaska Reads Act: District Reading Improvement," which is also a requirement. She added that individualized reading improvement plans are participated in with the parent and teacher. She concluded the presentation by stating that she hoped the data and student learning were better understood.

[9:24:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX related that his kids did not have trouble learning how to read; therefore, he did not know what it felt like when "it didn't work." He questioned whether parents could get an "assignment" where they could make a significant contribution to their child's success in reading.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied yes, the individual reading improvement plan (IRIP) is a suggestion to what parents can do at home to assist in learning.

[9:25:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK asked how much financial burden of the bill is picked up by school districts.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied that the actual fiscal note is \$6,000 for the drafting of regulations, but that reading in general is a core mission of school districts.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK noted that some districts are "drowning" with the Alaska Reads Act and not being able to fund it. He asked whether it was appropriate to try and implement more if current requirements can't be met.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP offered her belief the proposed legislation was not asking for additional work, it was just clarifying

language. She expressed that she would love an additional investment in reading.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK asked whether the reading requirements that need to be met would be on English standards.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied that at the present time, the department is creating screeners in six different languages.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK requested a list of the languages.

[9:29:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT observed that slide 13 did not include home school students or where they fall in the Alaska Reads Act.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied that all students are required, and the "ask" is in K-3 to participate. In addition, there is the parents' right to decide whether to have their student assessed.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT requested a breakdown to reflect which students are homeschooled.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP stated she could provide data by district and school.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked for confirmation that the Act has just been in effect this school year.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP confirmed this was the first year the accountability system for the Act was in place.

[9:30:58 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:30 a.m. to 9:31 a.m.

[9:31:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT expressed concern about making changes to something that has not been in place long and asked whether the changes were brought forth from the districts. She further questioned the need for change after the first year of implementation.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP explained that the "asks" were additional asks from practitioners "on the ground." In regard to the assessment, it was at the district level.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT requested the results of focus groups or where the data was collected from to get a sense of the areas the asks are coming from.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP confirmed she could gather the information and provide it to the committee at a later date.

[9:33:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK asked Commissioner Bishop how well the new requirements gel with current curriculum already in place.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP asked for confirmation whether he meant the Alaska Reads Act in general.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK expressed his concern about what HB 274 would implement. He pointed out slide 19 regarding parental involvement and what would happen if a child does not have a parent present.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP acknowledged that that happens, but the intent of the new language in the bill was to not exclude parents.

[9:37:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked about the data collected, and if it is not required, "how does it come about."

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied it is for approximately 80 percent of students, and at the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), it is a large enough number for the department to make decisions.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY observed that teachers would know through other assessments whether their kids were falling back. She referred to a "stakeholder group," and asked Commissioner Bishop whether she talked to them regarding the changes she wished to make.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP explained that the stakeholder group is in process to be gathered back and noted it is also a request in the ask. She added that every child deserves to learn no matter their level, and how all students are doing is of key interest.

[9:41:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY sought an example of doing an IRIP.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said the IRIP is a plan that is written separately, and she further explained the additional screeners.

[9:43:26 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD opened public testimony on HB 274. After ascertaining no one wished to testify, she closed public testimony.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that HB 274 was held over.

[9:44:17 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:44 a.m.