

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 20, 2024

8:02 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**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

University of Alaska Board of Regents

Seth Church - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) - ADVANCED

Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development

Pamela Dupras - Anchorage

Barbara Tyndall - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

HOUSE BILL NO. 147

"An Act relating to teacher certificates for retired teachers."

- MOVED HB 147 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 382

"An Act relating to education; relating to the rights of the parents of public school students; relating to the rights of public school teachers; relating to the records of public school students; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 391

"An Act relating to charter schools; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 147

SHORT TITLE: RETIRED TEACHER CERTIFICATE

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) DIBERT

03/29/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/29/23	(H)	L&C, EDC
04/10/23	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/10/23	(H)	<Bill Hearing Canceled>
01/26/24	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
01/26/24	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
02/02/24	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
02/02/24	(H)	Heard & Held
02/02/24	(H)	MINUTE(L&C)
02/12/24	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
02/12/24	(H)	<Bill Hearing Rescheduled to 02/14/24>
02/14/24	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
02/14/24	(H)	Moved HB 147 Out of Committee
02/14/24	(H)	MINUTE(L&C)
02/15/24	(H)	L&C RPT 6DP
02/15/24	(H)	DP: CARRICK, FIELDS, SADDLER, PRAX, RUFFRIDGE, SUMNER
03/20/24	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 382

SHORT TITLE: EDUCATION; PARENT/TEACHER RIGHTS

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) CARPENTER

02/20/24	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/20/24	(H)	EDC, JUD
03/20/24	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SETH CHURCH, Appointee  
University of Alaska Board of Regents  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents.

PAMELA DUPRAS, Appointee  
Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development.

BARBARA TYNDALL, Appointee  
Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development.

REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE DIBERT  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, introduced HB 147.

TAMMY SMITH, Staff  
Representative Maxine Dibert  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 147 on behalf of Representative Dibert, prime sponsor.

KELLY MANNING, Deputy Director  
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence  
Department of Education and Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 147.

REPRESENTATIVE BEN CARPENTER  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, introduced HB 382.

KENDRA BROUSSARD, Staff  
Representative Ben Carpenter  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave the sectional analysis for HB 382 on behalf of Representative Carpenter, prime sponsor.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:02:52 AM](#)

**CO-CHAIR JUSTIN RUFFRIDGE** called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Representatives Prax, McCormick, McKay, Himschoot, Story, Allard, and Ruffridge were present at the call to order.

**CONFIRMATION HEARINGS**

**University of Alaska Board of Regents**  
**Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development**

[8:04:37 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the first order of business would be the confirmation hearings on governor's appointees to various boards and commissions.

[8:04:56 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:05 a.m. to 8:06 a.m.

[8:06:05 AM](#)

SETH CHURCH, Appointee, University of Alaska Board of Regents, as appointee to the University of Alaska Board of Regents, expressed that he was humbled to be nominated and provided a brief personal and professional background. He offered his belief that his role as a regent is to support other regents fully and to support student enrollment and [address] deferred maintenance. Included in the goals he shared for the University of Alaska (UA) system were the importance for the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) to be a Research 1 (R1) institution, for the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to continue to invest in being a workforce university, and for the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) to be a liberal arts and marine biology institution. Referring to deferred maintenance, he explained that there are opportunities to help fix the issue with a \$35 million per year plan and a host of other opportunities to enhance the value of the university system. He thanked the committee and encouraged questions.

[8:09:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on the nomination for Seth Church. After ascertaining no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[8:10:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY thanked Mr. Church for his interest in serving and asked him how he saw the board's role in working with the K-12 system and getting information from the faculty.

MR. CHURCH replied he was impressed with the programs for dual enrollment and allowing students to get college credit for their classes. He opined that the number will be promising for retaining Alaska students, and the more involvement that can be done the better it could be for the whole state. In response to a follow-up question, he stated that he was impressed by how well board members and faculty were working together. Faculty is represented on site, he explained, and are allowed to speak at meetings and give reports. He added that shared governance is happening, and he foresees great collaboration.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Mr. Church about the student voice being represented.

MR. CHURCH replied that at each meeting there is time allotted for comments, questions, and reports from the student government. He reminded the committee that there is a student regent who attends every meeting; therefore, the student voice is present.

[8:12:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK asked Mr. Church whether one student regent is adequate for representation for UA.

MR. CHURCH expressed his belief that the student regent was well spoken and had a strong presence on the board. He added that he had not been informed about any issues with students not being heard and, if there were any issues, he urged that information be sent to him.

MR. CHURCH, in response to a request from Representative McCormick, reiterated his prior statement regarding the classifications of UAF, UAA, and UAS.

[8:15:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Mr. Church to speak to the Troth Yeddha' program at UAF.

MR. CHURCH replied that the program is privately supported through many Alaska Native corporation partners and Indigenous studies programs, and he expressed his excitement in support for a new campus. Currently, he explained, there is an inclusive space for Native people on campus and the expanded space would allow for more activity.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Mr. Church what his nonprofit work was outside of his professional life that has helped inform his positions.

MR. CHURCH replied he was involved with the Chamber of Commerce, missionary outreaches, and he has volunteered on many boards and commissions.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Mr. Church what he sees is the relationship between the legislature and the Board of Regents.

MR. CHURCH replied that the legislature "holds the purse" for part of UA's funding and he saw the legislature as an integral partner with UA as well as being a support system.

[8:19:14 AM](#)

MR. CHURCH, in response to questions from Co-Chair Ruffridge, expounded upon his educational background and spoke about his role among the variety of programs within UA, reemphasizing the issues of having a trained workforce and noting his background is suited for helping with the "huge problem" of deferred maintenance.

[8:21:20 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE thanked Mr. Church and welcomed the next nominee.

[8:21:58 AM](#)

PAMELA DUPRAS, Appointee, Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development, provided her personal and professional background and highlighted that she had been a teacher for 22 years, has taught in many different areas throughout the state, and currently teaches in the English Language Learner (ELL)

department. She further related that she is a lifelong Alaskan and grew up in the town of Atka on the Aleutian Islands.

8:23:38 AM

REPRESENTATIVE STORY welcomed Ms. Dupras and asked how her various years in education could contribute to helping the board.

MS. DUPRAS replied that she was excited when the state began the Alaska Reads Act, and that she had extensive experience in reading starting early in her career. She stressed her support for the Act being one of the main reasons she was interested in the board: to ensure keeping that "energy" within the state in order to educate Alaska children. She further expressed her interest in all the experiences statewide and reiterated her contribution to teaching in both rural and urban areas.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY pointed out that part of the strategic plan of the board involved promoting students' safety and well-being. She asked Ms. Dupras how she aimed to ensure mental health education and services through her role on the board.

MS. DUPRAS referred to Representative Story's question as "vast" and offered her support for whatever the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) decides as a board regarding those [issues] as they are a big part of education, and a struggle. She noted that resources are lacking in the type of care some students need, and expressed her willingness to work with those who are excited to help and make situations better for all schools in Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY referred to a bill that would entail asking the state board to develop mental health standards for school districts to use and asked Ms. Dupras what her perspective of that was.

MS. DUPRAS responded she was not familiar enough with the contents of the bill to be able to share what her thoughts would be.

8:27:35 AM

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on the nomination for Pamela Dupras. After ascertaining no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

8:28:03 AM

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX commented that he was not familiar with the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School and sought more information.

MS. DUPRAS replied it was a K-8 program in the Anchorage School District (ASD) focused on teaching students Native values through the adopted curriculum that follows the district's curriculum and infuses it with cultural aspects. She noted there are approximately 280 students, which makes it a fairly small program, and added that it is labeled a Title 1 school.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked Ms. Dupras if her experience with the charter school may be integrated with that of efforts in the Bush districts.

MS. DUPRAS reiterated that she had opportunities to teach throughout the state and grew up on the Aleutian Islands; therefore, this knowledge and recognition of various cultures is brought with her. Through every grade level, she explained, there is a different focus for a culture group, and she serves as a resource to fellow teachers due to her contacts in various areas throughout the state.

8:31:48 AM

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Dupras to elaborate on her "Spalding training" and whether it included The Writing Road to Reading Program in the 1990s.

MS. DUPRAS replied yes.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Dupras to share how she understood the role of public schools in Alaska.

MS. DUPRAS offered her belief that public schools are here to provide the best quality education that is possible for all students within the state, and that she had insight into the differences between urban and rural education. The resources in rural areas are not available to students and public education is an opportunity to provide equity for all peoples of Alaska, she said.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Dupras about her experience as an ELL instructor.

MS. DUPRAS replied that the students learning English come from a variety of language backgrounds with the main being Yup'ik. She said that her role was mainly as a supporter to the students to have access to the "academic language" of English.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT offered a scenario on if she were working with ELLs in a school where there is a focus on Alaska Native students, whether there was a need for ELL instruction in rural Alaska.

MS. DUPRAS opined that it is not necessary to provide an ELL education to all students, but having students interact with language is more important than providing another program. All the magic happens in the classroom because that is where students are interacting with each other, she observed, and if they are interacting with high quality curriculum and instructors, then they will have access to the language background that is necessary to participate in the world.

[8:36:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT sought clarity that the academic language Ms. Dupras worked on with students could be gained through reading instruction.

MS. DUPRAS confirmed that was correct and through all curriculum, whether reading, science, or math instruction, students gain the academic language necessary to function.

[8:37:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked for a clearer picture regarding Ms. Dupras' focus on the academics in learning to read and that she was not embedding culture.

MS. DUPRAS explained that the curriculum is used however the educator is integrating the culture within that curriculum. For example, students in the fifth grade were learning about invasive plant species, and in Alaska that was occurring, thus the Alaska aspect was brought into the curriculum. She added that knowing students and their backgrounds helps to connect all pieces to the curriculum that is being provided in the school.

[8:39:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE touched on the difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers in rural Alaska and asked Ms. Dupras whether

she could comment on solutions or ways the board could address some of those concerns.

MS. DUPRAS replied that was a difficult question. She recounted that she began teaching when the retirement plan changed, and her thoughts at the time were that she found it sad that educators were not voicing that that would not be good for the state. She added that "being past Tier 2," the state is losing educators since they see that they could have a better quality of life and make more money in another career field, and this is something she opined the state needs to address.

[8:42:35 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD stated that she was impressed with Ms. Dupras' resume and asked her to elaborate on being an English learner herself.

MS. DUPRAS recognized the way communication differs in rural versus urban Alaska and related that growing up she was raised by her grandparents who spoke her Native language around her; therefore, she can read and write the language, but not fluently, she noted. She said she became interested in the language aspect because many children had been told their first language would not have a positive impact on their education. She added that there are many students who do not interact with language much in their younger years that have this language gap, and it makes a big difference in academic performance.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked Ms. Dupras if her cultural background would bring a broader perspective to the board.

MS. DUPRAS replied that she hoped so, and she expressed her passion for being a rural as well as an urban educator which gave her a broader perspective about what is being proposed by the state or the board.

[8:48:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Ms. Dupras how she saw her experience on the state board interacting with the Board of Regents.

MS. DUPRAS expressed her hope that there would be collaboration to make sure university systems are providing opportunities for Alaskans to become educators and provide the education that students need in order to be successful in the system. She

added that the transition from high school to the university system should be as seamless as possible.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Ms. Dupras if she knew how often meetings take place between the state board and the university.

MS. DUPRAS replied that she is new to the board and did not know whether there was a regular schedule.

[8:51:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT commented that more than 50 percent of ELL students were born in the U.S. She acknowledged the high number of Indigenous students in Alaska and that ELL students do not always come from somewhere else.

[8:52:10 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE thanked Ms. Dupras and welcomed the next nominee.

[8:52:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK referred to the Representative from North Pole who opined that rural Alaska is clamoring for charter schools, and he wished to correct that the Bush is asking for adequacy funded public schools.

[8:53:38 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:53 a.m. to 8:54 a.m.

[8:54:19 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE asked the next nominee, Ms. Tyndall, to try a different method of communication due to a bad connection.

[8:55:01 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:55 a.m. to 8:57 a.m.

[8:57:58 AM](#)

BARBARA TYNDALL, Appointee, Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development, provided her professional and personal background. She noted that she attended a Career and Technical Education (CTE) conference in Anchorage recently, and what she

learned was encouraging in that the conference room was filled with educators dedicated to providing alternative career-oriented learning tracks to better prepare students for the practical world of jobs and careers. She said since there are no "cookie-cutter" children, there should not be cookie-cutter education tracks, and she stated she would like to see evidence-based tracks that are producing great outcomes for children. She acknowledged it is a time of change in education and that she would like to be a part of it.

[9:00:40 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on the nomination for Barbara Tyndall. After ascertaining no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[9:01:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Ms. Tyndall, through her role on the board, how she would aim to ensure student mental health education and services.

MS. TYNDALL addressed that she was recently made the chair of a safety board for mental health and confessed she is not up to speed just yet, being it began a few weeks ago. She said her plans are to "dig deep into it" and that she is ready to take it on. She emphasized her concern with mental health issues across the state and the importance of addressing health and safety.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY referred to a bill that would entail asking the state board to develop mental health standards, so students "have the information" and asked Ms. Tyndall whether she had any perspectives on the legislation.

MS. TYNDALL replied that she had not seen the bill but would look into it. She added that "we should jump on this" and move it forward.

[9:03:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT expressed concern about a document sent by Ms. Tyndall to another legislator approximately three years ago opposing mental health counseling and asked Ms. Tyndall what she intended to do in her role.

MS. TYNDALL explained that at the time she was concerned about counseling with children being done in schools without parental

consent and said that that was the most she could remember. In taking on the role of chair in her new committee, she stated she would delve much deeper into the subject and clarified that she is not opposed to [instruction regarding] mental health but was not sure it belonged in schools and may be best for families to look for outside of the school. She is looking at the issue closely, she confirmed.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT brought up a situation of an elementary student attempting suicide and another sent home for suicidal ideation. The intervention was conducted by the school-based counselor, who was able to work with the students and their families, she explained. She encouraged Ms. Tyndall to think about the students who may not have family support to get the counseling needs outside of school, and the availability of counselors being they have waitlists for months. She asked Ms. Tyndall about the aforementioned document again, and whether she had done anything in her tenure on the board outside of the normal public process.

MS. TYNDALL responded not that she could recall.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT referred to the board adding an agenda item on the last day of its meeting, with no prior notification to the public. She clarified that it was an agenda item to consider a resolution supporting the creation of a separate sports league through the association of student activities.

MS. TYNDALL confirmed that occurred at her first meeting on the board and she voted in support of the resolution.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Tyndall whether that felt like an appropriate process.

MS. TYNDALL stated that she felt the resolution related to safety for certain students and there were a number of things to consider in the resolution; therefore, she chose the one she deemed most appropriate.

[9:09:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT returned to the document Ms. Tyndall sent three years ago and asked Ms. Tyndall if mental health were outside of DEED's scope, whether student activities would be outside of DEED's scope as well.

MS. TYNDALL responded that she did not recall saying anything about that which is outside of DEED's scope and further explained that she is in the process of learning what the state board is.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT referred to recent written public testimony Ms. Tyndall had submitted, positing that "for far too long our schools have been used as propaganda machines to indoctrinate our children on [critical race theory] CRT to the exclusion [of] all other viewpoints." She asked Ms. Tyndall on what experience the statement was based.

MS. TYNDALL recollected her involvement with her own children and those in her community who felt the school was not adequately meeting the needs of children and "going off in other directions doing other things." She recalled a former teacher who expressed her frustration about programs taking away from class time, which might be good programs but do not give teachers adequate time for education and overburden them.

[9:13:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Tyndall who she considered to be the most vulnerable students that would need the most support in public schools.

MS. TYNDALL replied that she had grandchildren she considered vulnerable but that there are communities with substance abusing parents raising kids who are vulnerable and not being adequately provided for. She highlighted her time on the [Alaska Department of Family and Community Services] Juvenile Justice Board and gave examples of her interactions as a board member.

[9:15:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked Ms. Tyndall to elaborate more on the Juvenile Justice Board and what the experience enabled her to bring to the Alaska State Board of Education.

MS. TYNDALL explained that she had been to numerous conferences nationwide where many issues were addressed, and that she had seen firsthand the conditions throughout Alaska. Her biggest takeaway was in Nome, Alaska, which had what she described as a wonderful program with an unlocked detention center where kids would do community service-type work and adults were present to support the children. She further noted that children became healthier in this system, such as arriving underweight and

leaving at a normal weight. She offered a personal example of her own child who went through the justice system and prevailed.

[9:20:53 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD acknowledged Ms. Tyndall's decades of working with at-risk youths and asked what her proudest moment as an educator was.

MS. TYNDALL related a situation of a young boy who could not read, and she had learned the "method" and taught him; therefore, they both experienced success.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD addressed the community that she respected due diligence, and she appreciated Representative Himschoot doing her due diligence as well in vetting the nominees.

[9:23:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK noted that every school does not have a mental health counselor, and he asked Ms. Tyndall where a student who does not have access to resources in their community could look.

MS. TYNDALL responded that she never stops learning, and that she understands the extreme situations in rural Alaska compared to urban areas. She said there may need to be alternatives in rural Alaska where children are "sent somewhere" or can access help online. She agreed there needs to be someone present to listen to children and let them express what they need to, and she stressed that a caring adult is preeminent in a child's life. She stated she would investigate the situation.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK noted the lack of funding being a deterrent in having a mental health counselor in each school and said he would be happy to work with Ms. Tyndall to learn more about the realities in Bush Alaska.

[9:27:02 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE referred to Ms. Tyndall's teaching certification on her resume and asked whether she held a certificate in the State of Alaska for any of her experience.

MS. TYNDALL confirmed she did not and noted that she had been retired for some time.

[9:27:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT pointed out Ms. Tyndall's opening comment about homeschoolers doing well and asked her to provide evidence for the comment.

MS. TYNDALL said she was well acquainted with Interior Distance Education of Alaska's (IDEA) teachers as well as talking with parents and other teachers and most concur it is going very well and will continue to.

[9:29:22 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD commented that the rural community of Cordova did not have a nurse but within 700 yards there is a hospital where students can get help. She added that 37 percent of schools across the U.S. do not have nurses in their schools and opined it is unrealistic to think every school will have a nurse.

[9:29:57 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE stated that the House Education Standing Committee has reviewed the qualifications of the governor's appointees and recommends that the following names be forwarded to a joint session for consideration: Seth Church, University of Alaska Board of Regents; Pamela Dupras and Barbara Tyndall, Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development. He said that signing the report regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects an individual member's approval or disapproval of the appointee, and the nomination is merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[9:30:54 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:30 a.m. to 9:33 a.m.

**HB 147-RETIRED TEACHER CERTIFICATE**

[9:33:22 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the next order of business would be HB 147, "An act relating to teacher certificates for retired teachers."

[9:33:37 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE DIBERT, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 147 and paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The first thing this bill seeks to do is honor teachers in the State of Alaska for their years of dedication to our youth by providing them with a lifetime teachers certificate at no cost. Under current law, retired teachers pay a one-time \$250 fee for this type of certificate. The current fee brings very little revenue to the state. Retired teachers normally only seek a life-time certificate if they plan on re-entering the classroom as substitutes.

The other thing this bill does is extend the number of consecutive days a retired teacher holding this type of certificate can long-term substitute from 120 days to 165 days. This allows a person holding this type of certificate to fill in as a long-term substitute for more than an entire semester in cases where absences continue for extended periods.

Alaska educators occasionally must take a leave of absence from their classroom for different reasons including medical procedures, caring for a child or elder, the birth of a child, as well as other emergencies. On rare occasions, teachers abruptly exit a position mid-year for personal reasons, leaving the school in a bind. When regular teachers must leave positions during the academic year, this bill will take some pressure off schools in finding skilled, qualified substitutes and allow them to fill longer vacancies than previously allowed. This bill also encourages retired teachers to share their expertise with students and young teachers and to remain living in Alaska as active members of communities and contributors to the economy.

REPRESENTATIVE DIBERT additionally shared an anecdote from her recent visit to her alma mater, Ryan Middle School in Fairbanks, and spoke of her seventh-grade teacher who was asked to be a long-term substitute teacher.

[9:39:11 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked for an explanation of the current limitation on the number of days [a teacher can long-term substitute] and how HB 147 would change the limitation of the number of days.

[9:39:31 AM](#)

TAMMY SMITH, Staff, Representative Maxine Dibert, Alaska State Legislature, answered questions during the hearing on HB 147 on behalf of Representative Dibert, prime sponsor. She addressed Representative Himschoot and explained that currently the number of days was increased to 165 from 120 due to schools being in need of substitute teachers for a very long time. Being that a school year is approximately 180 days, she explained, school districts must post positions for at least 10 days so the 165 pushes it into the new school year. The bill would provide ample time for districts to have a long-term substitute teacher in a position, she said.

[9:41:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX sought to clarify that the 165 school days excluded weekends.

MS. SMITH confirmed that was correct and that it included student contact days.

[9:41:25 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD wished to make sure the public was aware that Representative Dibert's staff communicated with the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) in order for the department to be supportive of the bill.

MS. SMITH confirmed that was correct.

[9:41:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT inquired about how many teachers hold the lifetime certificate.

MS. SMITH said DEED was online for further clarification, but that the number had increased to about 1,000.

[9:42:22 AM](#)

KELLY MANNING, Deputy Director, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development, answered questions during the hearing on HB 147 and clarified that she could get back to the committee with exact numbers. She added that there are approximately 100 retired teachers per year who apply for the retired teachers certification.

[9:42:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT offered her understanding that the lifetime certificates are not counted on for funding for the Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC).

MS. MANNING replied that receipts DEED collects from retired teacher certification fees would go into it; however, it comes from all receipts from teacher certifications.

[9:44:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked to be reminded of the number of vacancy rates for teaching staff across the state.

MS. SMITH responded that she did not have the rates.

MS. MANNING added that she did not have the current teacher vacancy rates on hand but would get back to the committee at a later date. She further noted that teacher turnover varies by area.

[9:45:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK moved to report HB 147 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

[9:45:55 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE objected for the purpose of discussion. He noted there was no public testimony for HB 147 in the House Education Standing Committee, but there was in a prior committee; therefore, he said he was not opposed to moving the bill and removed his objection. There being no further objection, HB 147 was reported out of the House Education Standing Committee.

[9:46:26 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:46 a.m. to 9:49 a.m.

**HB 382-EDUCATION; PARENT/TEACHER RIGHTS**

[9:49:41 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the final order of business would be HB 382, "An act relating to education; relating to the rights of parents of public school students; relating to the rights of public school teachers; relating to the records of public school students; and providing for an effective date."

[9:50:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BEN CARPENTER, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 382 and paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Bill 382 increases parental participation in their children's education and allows parents access to school curriculum, budgets, and school boards. HB 382 allows teachers to use their professional judgement to establish and enforce rules for their classrooms.

Parental involvement has been a top priority for school leaders for decades, and research shows that it can make a major difference in student outcomes. Studies show more parental involvement leads to improved academic outcomes. When parents are involved in their children's schooling, students show higher academic achievement, school engagement, and motivation. School practices encouraging families to support their child's math learning at home have led to higher percentages of students scoring at or above proficiency on standardized math tests. Research shows that parent involvement with reading activities has a positive impact on reading achievement, language comprehension, and expressive language skills, as well as students' interest in reading, attitudes toward reading, and level of attention in the classroom.

HB 382 requires all public schools to be operated by academic policy committees. Alaska's charter public schools, which are operated by academic policy

committees comprised of parents, teachers, and school employees, are the best in the nation. Academic policy committees hire the school principal and employees, supervise the employees, and supervise the academic operation of the school.

HB 382 allows parents to review curriculum, books, and all instructional materials, to meet with each teacher of the child, to review the budget, to address the school board, to withdraw children from activities or programs, and to provide consent for medical examinations. HB 382 has numerous parental notification requirements including for a change in curriculum, options for school choice, any plans to eliminate gifted and talented programs, or if any school professional acts to change a student's gender markers.

HB 382 also protects a child's privacy by narrowly specifying who, and under what circumstances, someone who is not a parent or guardian can access the student's records. It also protects them by requiring that every school's written safety program include procedures to address the physical safety and privacy of students in locker rooms and bathrooms by requiring a student to use only facilities designed for members of the student's biological sex.

HB 382 adds a section of law that does not exist to provide teachers with a bill of rights. Teachers will establish their classroom rules and schools will respect their professional judgement, provide leadership training to teachers, and treat them with civility and respect. Schools cannot require a teacher to fill out excessive paperwork and cannot adopt curricula and policies that conflict with the curricula and policies of the school's academic policy committee.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER shared that he would be frustrated as a teacher if he had disruptive students who were able to keep coming back to the classroom and continue to disrupt it. He added that there must be a better policy or way to deal with the situation than to drag down "the whole" because of bad behavior of a few, and teachers need an administration that will support them.

[9:56:13 AM](#)

KENDRA BROUSSARD, Staff, Representative Ben Carpenter, Alaska State Legislature, gave the sectional analysis for HB 382 [included in the committee packet] on behalf of Representative Carpenter, prime sponsor, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**Section 1**

Repeals and reenacts a parent's right to direct the education of the parent's child, to add that a public school shall:

Allow parents to review curriculum, books, and all instructional materials, to meet with each teacher of the child, to review the budget, to address the school board, to withdraw children from activities or programs, to provide consent for medical examinations, to access information about any plans to eliminate gifted and talented programs. Provide parents with information about all schools in which the student has the opportunity to enroll. Notify parents if the state alters the state academic standards. Notify parents if a school employee or contractor acts to change the child's gender markers, pronouns, or preferred name or allows the child to change the child's sex-based accommodations including locker rooms or bathrooms, or treats or advises regarding bullying, the child's mental health and any instance of self-harm or suicidal ideation, or specific threats to the safety of the child, the possession or use of drugs or other controlled substances by the child, or an eating disorder.

**Section 2**

Adds a new section of law to include the rights of teachers. Allows that a teacher may:

Establish and enforce classroom rules, remove a student from a classroom in accordance with the school's disciplinary and safety program, direct a disruptive or violent student to appropriate school personnel, assist in enforcing school rules while on school property, use reasonable force, to protect the

teacher or other person from injury, communicate with parents in making disciplinary decisions.

A school shall: Provide a teacher with information regarding the disposition of a referral the teacher has made regarding a violation of classroom or school rules, provide immediate assistance to classroom management during an emergency or when a student becomes uncontrollable, respect the professional judgement and discretion of a teacher, treat a teacher with civility and respect, and provide leadership training and support to teachers.

A school or school district may not: Establish a policy that prevents a teacher from exercising their rights, require a teacher to fill out excessively burdensome paperwork, or adopt curricula and policies that conflict with the curricula and policies of the school's academic policy committee.

### **Section 3**

Replaces school records law by narrowly specifying who has the right to a child's education records: parents or guardians, and in some circumstances law enforcement, child welfare or tribal caseworkers with access to a child's case plan, authorized US government officials, an entity or person designated under a grand jury subpoena or subpoena for law enforcement purposes or judicial order.

### **Section 4**

Adds a new section to public school's law to require every public school to establish an academic policy committee, similar to that of a charter school, consisting of parents of students attending the school, teachers, and school employees. The academic policy committee shall select the principal of the school and select, appoint, and otherwise supervise the employees of the school. The academic policy committee is designated to supervise the academic operation of a public school.

### **Section 5**

Removes from law the requirement that school boards appoint and otherwise control all school employees and administrative officers, consistent with adding an academic policy committee with that authority.

**Section 6**

Adds to school district disciplinary and safety programs that every school governing body must adapt that the body shall include in its written program procedures to address the physical safety and privacy of students in locker rooms and restrooms by requiring a student to use only facilities designed for members of the student's biological sex.

**Section 7**

Adds to uncodified law that this Act applies to contracts entered on or after the effective date of this act.

**Section 8**

Adds immediate effect.

[10:00:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY offered her belief that parental involvement and family support are the biggest factors of how students do in school. She pointed out that many policies in Section 1 are in policy now, which she found reassuring, but she inquired about the reasoning why they are being proposed under HB 382.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER replied that he did not think all districts were exactly alike and some parents may have had different experiences as to what they have access to. He offered an example of asking his local district if he could review the budget and was told he could if he visited the office and had staff "look over his shoulder."

REPRESENTATIVE STORY stated she did not doubt his experience and questioned how it would work to have academic policy committees take over the role of the elected school board members. In reference to student privacy rights, she added that she would contact Legislative Legal Services for an opinion.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER said there is no closer local control than parents, and if it is working for charter schools, it should work for all schools.

[10:04:02 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD agreed with Representative Carpenter that that is a good point. On "the particular boards" that were referenced, she asked whether parents would be elected as well.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER responded that they currently are to charter schools.

[10:04:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK stated he would like more explanation on what defines a disrupted student.

[10:05:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER explained that the gist is that teacher discretion is when disruption becomes a distraction to education, and it should be respected by the administration, parents, and legal establishment. He further explained that if the teacher believes they cannot have the student in the classroom, then there are rules and leadership in place, so the disruption does not continue.

[10:06:00 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that HB 382 was held over.

[10:07:34 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.