

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 435 (HES)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/11/92
Referred: Finance

Sponsor(s): SENATORS COTTEN, Collins, Uehling

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act establishing an elementary school class size reduction pilot program; and providing
2 for an effective date."

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

4 * Section 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE. (a) The legislature finds that

5 (1) there is a need for information regarding the effect of reducing the ratio of pupils to
6 a teacher in public elementary school classes;

7 (2) preliminary research has shown that smaller classes have a positive effect on test
8 scores, school discipline, and parent involvement in schools; and

9 (3) a four-year pilot program would allow the state to collect necessary information on
10 the effects of reducing class size in public elementary schools.

11 (b) The purpose of this Act is to establish a program under which certain public elementary
12 schools would reduce the size of their classes and over a four-year period the state would monitor the
13 effect of the smaller class size on test scores, school discipline, and parent involvement in education.

14 * Sec. 2. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASS SIZE REDUCTION PROGRAM. (a) The elementary

1 school class size reduction program is established in the Department of Education. The program shall
2 include

3 (1) additional state aid provided under (e) of this section for a school in a district that
4 is selected under (c) of this section;

5 (2) a program application and selection process determined by the department;

6 (3) the objectives of the elementary school size reduction program;

7 (4) a method to monitor and review the effects of a smaller class size on students in a
8 school selected to participate in the program; a district selected to participate in the program shall report
9 to the department annually by June 30 while participating in the program; and

10 (5) a certification by the chief school administrator that program funds will be separately
11 accounted for.

12 (b) A district eligible under (c) of this section may apply to participate in the program by
13 submitting an application on a form provided by the department. The application must include

14 (1) the objectives of the program and the district's plan for meeting those objectives;

15 (2) the district's plan for using increased state funds for the purpose of reducing the ratio
16 of students to a teacher in certain schools;

17 (3) the existing ratio of students to a teacher in each elementary school in the district that
18 the district is proposing for participation in the program;

19 (4) if available, the most recent standardized test scores for each grade in each school
20 that is proposed for participation by the district; and

21 (5) a program to train teachers who participate in the class size reduction program.

22 (c) A district is eligible to propose an elementary school in the district for participation in the
23 program described in this section if, prior to participation in the program, the average class ratio of
24 students to a teacher in the elementary school is greater than 25 to 1. In this subsection, "average class
25 ratio" means the average of those ratios taken from each class in the elementary school other than an
26 art, typing, library, music, vocational-technical, or physical education class.

27 (d) The department may not select more than five elementary schools for participation in the
28 program required under this section. A school selected to participate in the program required under this
29 section shall

30 (1) participate until June 30, 1996;

31 (2) maintain a ratio of pupils to a teacher that does not exceed 15 to 1 in a class in

1 grades K - 4; the pupil teacher ratio required under this paragraph does not apply during the final eight
2 weeks of each school year; and

3 (3) endeavor to maintain a ratio of pupils to a teacher that does not exceed 20 to 1 in a
4 class in grades 5 and 6.

5 (e) Each elementary school selected to participate in the program required under this section
6 shall constitute a separate funding community for purposes of AS 14.17.031. Money required to be
7 expended under this subsection shall be included in the annual operating budget prepared by the
8 department.

9 (f) The department shall include a report on the program established under this Act, as a part
10 of the department's annual report.

11 (g) In this section,

12 (1) "department" means the Department of Education;

13 (2) "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.250;

14 (3) "teacher" means a person who is certified under AS 14.20.020 and who is an actual
15 classroom instructor in a regular instructional program.

16 * Sec. 3. It is the intent of the legislature that funding for the program established under sec. 2 of
17 this Act not be reduced if AS 14.17 is amended to change the formula providing state aid for education.

18 * Sec. 4. Sections 1 and 2 of this Act are repealed June 30, 1996.

19 * Sec. 5. This Act takes effect July 1, 1992.