

**S B**

**395**

# Alaska State Legislature

Senator Paul Fischer  
Senate District D  
Box 784  
Soldotna, Alaska 99669  
(907) 262-9420 W  
262-9269 H



## State Senate

White in Juneau  
PO. Box V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811  
(907) 465-3791

April 16, 1988

I am taking this opportunity to write to clarify some misconceptions that have arisen from Senate Bill 395, an act relating to the school term. A copy of the bill is on the reverse side of this letter.

Certain children throughout the State of Alaska receive less than the standard 180 days of instruction that is mandated by law. Some of these absences are attributed to the subsistence lifestyles of parents requiring hunting and fishing time, as well as commercial fishing. The current law does not make allowances for these absences, and schools just show the children absent. The children lose valuable educational opportunities that are often not addressed.

SB 395 simply gives the local school board the discretion to adjust the school day to accommodate the different lifestyle needs of students. Current law allows adjustments for correcting asbestos problems. Conditions such as frozen pipes, flooding and lack of heat would also apply under this change. Changes must be approved by the Commissioner of Education to insure the changes remain within the guidelines of state law.

If you have any questions, or if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me in Juneau. I will accept collect calls.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Fischer".

Senator Paul A. Fischer

PAF/ssw

SB 395 Information

Alaska Association of Student Governments met this last week in Anchorage at West High School. There were approximately 250 students in attendance and over 26 schools represented. Weather did not permit some school's scheduled to arrive in time.

Schools that were definitely in attendance:

Glennallen  
Kotzebue  
Shevak  
Mt. Village  
Dillingham  
Tok

Unalaska  
Kodiak  
Kenai  
Soldotna  
Homer  
Seward  
Seldovia  
Nikolaevsk  
Sitka  
Juneau  
Metlakatla  
4 from Anchorage  
    West, East, Service, Bartlett  
Lathrop  
North Pole  
Eielson  
Monroe  
Bethel  
Ketchikan

Several smaller schools were in attendance, I don't have the names at this time.

AASG brought SB 395 before this body of student governments and after some discussion passed a resolution in favor of this legislation.

# Alaska State Legislature

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## State Senate

While in Juneau  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811  
(907) 465-3791

February 10, 1989

Mr. Bob Moore, Principal  
Nikolaevsk School  
Box 5129  
Anchor Point, Alaska 99556

Dear Bob:

I have recently been furnished a letter by one of the Representatives from District 5, in which you requested that legislation again be introduced relating to "school terms".

As you recall I sponsored this legislation last session; it passed the Senate, but was not acted upon by the House prior to adjournment.

I have drafted identical legislation to be introduced next week and enclosed a copy for your information. It is my desire that this legislation receive early consideration.

If I can be of further help to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cordially,

Paul A. Fischer  
State Senator

PAF/sgn

Enclosure

cc: ✓ Representative Mike Navarre  
Representative C.E. Swackhammer

1 IN THE SENATE

BY FISCHER

2 SENATE BILL NO.

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to the school term."

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

8 \* Section 1. AS 14.03.030 is amended to read:

9 Sec. 14.03.030. SCHOOL TERM. A school term begins and ends on  
10 the dates fixed by the governing body of a school district. A school  
11 term shall include not less than 180 days in session, unless [EXCEPT  
12 THAT], with the approval of the commissioner,

13 (1) a day used for in-service training of teachers is [MAY  
14 BE] substituted for a day in session, up to a maximum of 10 days;

15 (2) an "emergency closure day" is [MAY BE] substituted for  
16 a day in session because of conditions posing a threat to the health  
17 or safety of students; and

18 (3) a school board adopts [MAY ADOPT] a school term of not  
19 less than 150 days for a school and [IF] the commissioner finds that

20 (A) the shorter term is necessary [FOR ABATING ASBES-  
21 TOS HEALTH HAZARDS IN THE SCHOOL]; and

22 (B) the school board has submitted an acceptable plan  
23 under which students will receive the approximate educational  
24 equivalent of a 180-day term.  
25

Alaska State Legislature  
House of Representatives



FEB 06 1989

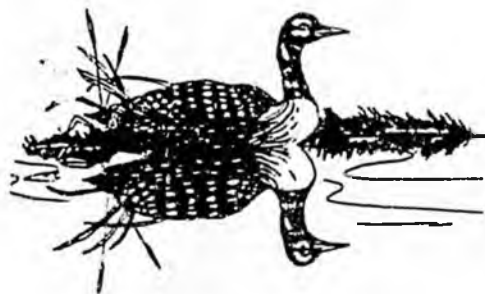
Rep. C.H. Swackhammer

Sen Fischer:

Do you plan to reintroduce  
a bill addressing this? If  
so I will do what I  
can to get it passed through  
the house. Pls advise

Pls return letter

Swack



Nikolaevsk

Николаевск



KENAI PENINSULA  
BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOX 5129, NIKOLAEVSK C. P. O.  
ANCHOR POINT, ALASKA 99556  
Jan. 30, 1989

Senator Paul Fisher  
Representative Swackhammer  
Representative Navarre

Dear Paul, Swack, Mike

I know that with the foundation formula funding, school construction debt retirement and reduced oil revenues you gentlemen are extremely busy. I hope, however, that you will bring to the floor and pass a bill allowing reduced school year with equivalent hours of instruction such as passed the Senate last year. This is important legislation for all bush communities and as revenues diminish it becomes even more critical.

Senator Fischer's bill last year was appropriate and adequate. It is imperative however that this proposal get immediate attention if it is going to make it through both houses during this session.

I am available to do anything in my power to assist you in this effort. Contact me immediately if I can be of service in making this proposal a reality.

Respectfully,

Bob Moore,  
Principal

235-7432 (home)  
235-8972 (work)

e Kenal Peninsula  
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school boundaries,  
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their own  
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aid.

students now at-  
chapman would be  
y the change, as  
7 preschool child  
he area. Students  
re those who live  
h Fork Road from  
village south to  
section with the

Associate Superintendent  
Tom Overman, and some  
school board members plan  
to attend, Mr. Pomeroy said.

The two committees met  
March 1 to discuss the pros  
and cons of the proposal and  
developed a list that was  
sent to affected parents this  
week, Nikolaevsk committee  
member Adele Hiles said.

Among the advantages are  
the school's bilingual pro-  
gram, the savings in bus  
transportation costs, and the

## School seeks change in schedule

Nikolaevsk School might  
go to longer days if a bill now  
in the state Senate Rules  
Committee passes.

The school would like to  
switch from six to seven-  
hour days and have a shorter  
school year, so that Old  
Believer students would not  
have to miss valuable school  
time during holy days, Prin-  
cipal Bob Moore said.

Senate Bill 395 would  
change the definition of the  
school year to allow 180 days  
or its equivalent, and would  
give them the flexibility they  
need, he said.

Nikolaevsk is already on a  
special calendar. This week,  
while the rest of the district's  
students are on spring  
break, Nikolaevsk students  
are still in class. They will

calendar, and a reduction in  
after-school social oppor-  
tunities.

Nikolaevsk Principal Bob  
Moore said if the change is  
made he would anticipate  
the school would need to add  
separate music and art pro-  
grams to its curricula and to  
hire a special Quest teacher.

The affected students are  
spread throughout the dif-  
ferent grades and Mr. Moore  
said he expected they could  
be accommodated within ex-

take their time off in April  
for Russian Easter.

There are about 16 holy  
days in the Old Believer  
calendar that students are  
required by their religion to  
take off. Now they just miss  
school. "If a child misses  
that many days in  
kindergarten through 12th  
grade," Mr. Moore said,  
"then he or she has lost the  
equivalent of one year."

He would like to alter the  
schedule to accommodate  
those holy days as well as the  
district's regular holiday  
and vacation schedule and  
make up the days missed by  
adding hours to each day in  
school.

He said allowing schools to  
adopt more flexible  
schedules to meet communi-  
ty needs would also benefit

now has 130. "We have the  
resources, the room and the  
desire to meet the needs of  
the people on North Fork,"  
he said.

Although Nikolaevsk is a  
K-12 school, high school  
students who now attend  
either Ninilchik or Homer  
High Schools would not be af-  
fected by the change.  
However, they could opt to  
change if they wanted to,  
Mr. Moore said.

communities that rely on  
subsistence.

"I'm really optimistic  
about its possibilities if we  
can get it through," he said.  
"Any school in any com-  
munity should be organized  
to meet the needs of the com-  
munity it serves. We need to  
be flexible in meeting those  
needs."

Sen. Paul Fischer, R-  
Soldotna, who introduced the  
bill, said he does not know  
when the bill will move to the  
floor of the Senate or what  
will happen to it when it gets  
there.

"I think it'll be a mixed  
vote," he said. "I introduced  
it because I think we need to  
get it out where we can take  
a look at it. But I think it will  
be a close vote."

bursed the borough for 72  
percent of its school debt  
payments — \$2.4 million less  
than the 80 percent figure in  
place when voters decided to  
incur the debt. The dif-  
ference represents an entire  
mill in borough property tax.

Mr. Cowper's position is  
that the state must stop fun-  
ding extravagant schools.  
Mr. Ramsuer said Mr.  
Cowper is bothered both by  
the money and the worry  
that the 80 percent level of  
reimbursement will simply  
invite districts to build more  
high-priced schools at state  
expense.

"This is just throwing  
money at the problem," he  
said. "What he'd like is for  
the legislature to pass a bill  
like the one Rep. Swackham-  
mer (D-Kerai) has introduc-  
ed to reform the school fun-  
ding process."

Political observers have  
speculated that Mr. Cowper  
might compromise if the  
reform bill passed. In ex-  
change for that measure, he  
might sign the bill allowing  
the higher level of reim-  
bursement.

Mr. Swackhammer's bill  
would provide full grants for  
construction of basic, no-  
frills schools. The Dept. of  
Education would award the  
money based on solid  
criteria, to make sure it was  
distributed fairly. For ex-  
tras, such as auditoriums  
and gyms, local voters would

## TAXES

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February 4, 1988

SENATE JOURNAL

p. 2139

SB 395

SENATE BILL NO. 395 by Senator Fischer, entitled:

"An Act relating to the school term."

was read the first time and referred to the Health, Education and Social Services Committee.

February 12, 1988

SENATE JOURNAL

p. 2247

SB 395

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 395 "An Act relating to the school term" and a majority of the committee recommended it be replaced with

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 395 (HESS)

and do pass. The report was signed by Senator Fischer, Chairman and concurred in by Senators Fanning and Jones. Senator Josephson signed "no recommendation."

Zero fiscal note published today from Department of Education.

SENATE BILL NO. 395 was referred to the Rules Committee.

# Alaska State Legislature

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## State Senate

While In Juneau  
P.O. Box V  
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(907) 465-3791

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Dick Eliason, Chairman  
Senate Rules Committee

FROM: Senator Paul Fischer *PAF*

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 395  
(relating to the school *PAF*)

DATE: March 10, 1988

I would appreciate your scheduling the above referenced bill before the Senate Rules Committee, for consideration of placing on the Senate calendar, at your earliest possible convenience.

The HESS committee version of this legislation provides a school term has to include "not less than 180 days in session, unless with the approval of the commissioner, (1) a day used for in-service training of teachers is substituted for a day in session, up to a maximum of 10 days; (2) an 'emergency closure day' is substituted for a day in session because of conditions posing a threat to the health or safety of students; and (3) a school board adopts a school term of not less than 150 days for a school and the commissioner finds that (A) the shorter term is necessary; and (B) the school board has submitted an acceptable plan under which students will receive the approximate educational equivalent of a 180-day term.

The original version said a school term could include "not less than the equivalent of 180 days in session" unless the conditions outlined were met. Current law provides for a shorter term "if necessary for abating asbestos health hazards in the school" and if the board has submitted an acceptable plan for an equivalent 180-day term.

PAF/sgn

---

*Wisilla -*  
*Fishing Communities -*

Offered: 2/12/88  
Referred: Rules

5-1774B

Original sponsor: Fischer

*Move for adoption of CS. HESS*

1 IN THE SENATE

THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

2

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 395 (HESS)

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

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*Economic Dist / Fishing Communities*

March, 1988

SB 395 information

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School's that were definitely in attendance were:

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Kotzebue  
Shevak  
Mt. Village  
Dillingham  
Tok  
Unalaska  
Kodiak  
Kenai  
Soldotna  
Homer  
Seward  
Seldovia  
Nikolvask  
Sitka  
Juneau  
Metlakatla  
4 from Anchorage  
West, East, Service, Bartlett  
Lathrop  
North Pole  
Eielson  
Monroe  
Bethel

Several smaller school's were in attendance, I don't have the names at this time.

AASG brought SB 395 before this body of student government's and after some discussion passed a resolution in favor of this legislation.

~~The resolution will be forthcoming in the mail.~~

~~This information provided by Bob Moore/235-8442~~

6 days -

$$\begin{array}{r} 36 \\ 5 \overline{) 180} \\ \underline{15} \\ 30 \\ 6 \overline{) 180} \end{array}$$

~~36 weeks.~~  
~~30 weeks.~~

5 day week - 36 weeks  
6 day week - 30 weeks  
7 day -

Not done.

$$\begin{array}{r} 26 \\ 7 \overline{) 182} \\ \underline{14} \\ 40 \end{array}$$