

SCOMM

125:2



Sec. 14.03.075 Secondary pupil competency testing. [Effective January 1, 2002].

(a) A pupil may not be issued a secondary school diploma unless the pupil passes a competency examination in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics. The department shall determine the form and contents of the examination and shall score completed examinations. A pupil who fails to pass the examination required under this subsection and who is no longer in attendance shall receive a certificate of achievement from the school district indicating the years of attendance and that the pupil has not passed a competency examination or received a diploma.

(b) A pupil who fails the examination required under this section may be reexamined. A reexamination may not be offered more often than once every three months and must occur within three years after the date the pupil is no longer in attendance. A pupil who passes the reexamination and who meets any other graduation requirements shall receive a diploma from the school district.

Sec. 14.03.080. Right to attend school.

(a) A child of school age is entitled to attend public school without payment of tuition during the school term in the school district in which the child is a resident subject to the provisions of AS 14.14.110 and 14.14.120.

(b) A person over school age may be admitted to the public school in the school district in which the person is a resident at the discretion of the governing body of the school district. A person over school age may be charged tuition by the governing body of the school district.

(c) A child under school age may be admitted to the public school in the school district of which the child is a resident at the discretion of the governing body of the school district if the child meets minimum standards prescribed by the board evidencing that the child has the mental, physical, and emotional capacity to perform satisfactorily for the educational program being offered.

(d) A child who is five years of age before August 15 following the beginning of the school year, and who is under school age, may enter a public school kindergarten.

(e) A child under school age shall be admitted to school in the district of which the child is a resident if immediately before the child became a resident of the district, the child was legally enrolled in the public schools of another district or state.

(f) This section does not require a school district to admit a child or person currently under suspension or expulsion under AS 14.03.160 in that or another school district.

Sec. 14.03.083. Contracting for services.

(a) A school district may contract for educational services provided to students in the district by an agency that is accredited by the department under AS 14.07.020 and (b) of this section.

(b) The department shall adopt regulations and establish program standards for educational services that may be contracted for by a school district.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

YOU ARE INVITED

TO THE

HIGH SCHOOL COMPETENCY TEST STATEWIDE TELECONFERENCE

Held By

The House Special Committee on Education

and

The Senate Health, Education and Social
Services Committee

DATE: Saturday, January 27, 2001

TIME: 10:00 a.m. until Noon

PLACE: All Legislative Information Offices

**Statewide Teleconference on the Competency Test
January 27, 2001**

Legislators on the Offnet:

Senator Gary Wilken

Invited Groups:

Alaska Association of Secondary Principals
Alaska Council of School Administrators
Alaska Parent Teacher Association
Anchorage Education Association
Association of Alaska School Boards
NEA - Alaska
All Alaska Public School Districts
All high school teachers (invited through the NEA)
University of Alaska (through Ann Ringstad)
Parents, Inc. (parents of disabled children)
Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
PERC (Parents for Effective Reading Curriculum) - Doug & Barb Lefler, Diane Kiana
Parents for Literate Graduates - Pam Bickford
Key Campaign

Invited Individuals:

Rich De Lorenzo,	Superintendent for Chugach School District
Jeff Ralston,	Chair of Science, Math & Technology Education at Nuniwarmiut School in Mekoryuk, AK (He will call in late, as his plane lands in Mekoryuk at 10:00)
Sara Gantt,	Service High PTA
Brad Drake	Principal in Metlakatla
Louis Martinez	Port Lions School District
Rev. Dr. Michael Mitchell	Teacher in Anchorage
Al Johnson	Ketchikan School Board
Harry Martin	Ketchikan Superintendent
Dr. Pfeifer	Ketchikan School Board
Lori Scanlan	Juneau-Douglas High School (JDHS) Teacher
Ryan DeLoch	10 th grade student at JDHS
Dr. Davis	Superintendent, Bering Strait School District
Jim Carden	Pribilof School District
Larry Wiget	Anchorage School District
Louise Parish,	member of PERC in Valdez
Bev Dodge	District 18 resident
Larry Johnson	District 18 resident
D-18 Constituents	via Legislative Update
Bill Webb	Administrator, Made in Alaska program
Richard Hebhart	Superintendent, Bristol Bay School District
Judy Doyon	Uzinki Community school principal
????????	Anchorage School District

Teleconference Sites:

**All Legislative Information Offices
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ALASKA

Public Hearing

Grad exams to be discussed

(Published January 27, 2001)

The state's new high school competency exam will be examined in a statewide public hearing today before the House Special Committee on Education and the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee. As required by a law passed in 1997, high school students will, by next spring, need to pass the exams in order to receive a diploma. High school sophomores and juniors have completed two rounds of preliminary tests so far, with mixed results across the state. The hearing is being held in Juneau, but Alaskans can participate through their local Legislative Information Offices.

Legislative Information Offices

Anchorage: 716 W. 4th, Ste. 200

269-0111, 269-0299 fax, 269-0260 TDD

Kenai Peninsula: 283-2030, 283-3075 fax

Mat-Su: 376-3704, 376-6180 fax

(These offices can give numbers to other LIOs around the state.)
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Anchorage Daily News

Panel gets pleas for exam delay

HEARING: Some call for a test in 2002, but most ask the education panel to hold off for four years

By Martha Bellisle

(Published January 28, 2001)

Stay on track and have the high school exit exams take effect in 2002, some callers told a legislative education panel during a statewide hearing Saturday, while most insisted that lawmakers hold off on the plan until 2006.

What was to be two hours of public comment turned into a four-hour stream of concerned and sometimes passionate testimony on whether, when and how the state should move forward with its new pass-a-test-for-a-high-school-diploma plan.

"Our students are not prepared," said Mary Miller of Nome. "We can be successful, but more time is needed."

But Richard Montgomery, principal of Petersburg High School, urged lawmakers to hold their course.

"This legislation has made students, teachers and staff sit up and take notice," Montgomery said, adding that one option might be to implement the reading exam next year and then add the writing test in 2002 and the math exam in 2003.

At present, the law requires all students graduating in 2002 and beyond to pass exams in reading, writing and math before receiving a diploma.

But when sophomores took a trial run of the test last year, two out of three failed the math portion, one out of two flunked writing and one in four failed reading.

As a result, Gov. Tony Knowles, a Democrat, introduced a bill Wednesday that would push the effective date of the tests to 2006, arguing that school districts and students need more time to prepare.

Rep. Con Bunde, author of the legislation requiring the tests, opposes any change to the timeline, arguing that it would send a message to current students that they can slack off for the next few years.

Bunde, R-Anchorage, also argues that nothing dramatically new could happen between now and 2006 that would suddenly make poor students academic stars.

Lori Stanley, a Juneau teacher, told members of the House Special Committee on Education and members of the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee that she has already seen ill effects of the

exit exam plan.

Stanley, who teaches at-risk students at Juneau-Douglas High School, said she knows of two juniors who dropped out of school because of the tests.

"They didn't think they could pass all three parts," Stanley said. "They didn't see the point in staying in school and moved on to get jobs."

Bill Morissette of Homer agreed that Alaska schools need tough standards. But, he said, "the timeline is a disaster that's waiting to happen." Moving the effective date forward and increasing funding for remediation programs will help ease some of the negative consequences of the testing, he said.

"It will take that amount of time to allow school districts to prepare students for the tests," said Catherine Parker of Sitka. Students futures "should not be decided by one fell swoop."

Beverly Turley of Kotzebue suggested that the Legislature look at how other states set up their high school testing programs to see whether phasing in the different segments would be wiser.

Mike Milligan of Kodiak asked legislators to take the time to formulate a test that develops students' potential rather than penalize those who don't make the grade.

"It appears that what we've got is an exam that punishes students who can't pass it," Milligan said.

But Bill Webb of Anchorage said he "strongly supports no delay in the implementation of the exit exam." Students have 12 years of study, he said, and the state has had four years to bring the testing into the schools.

"That's enough time," he said.

Elizabeth Bacorn of Petersburg said changing the effective date of the exams could have a detrimental effect on her two children, who have been preparing for the tests mentally and emotionally.

"To tell them for four years that this was coming, then tell them the adults who write the laws made an error sends the wrong message to kids," she said.

Louis Barton of Fairbanks said many students fail because of poor study habits and a lack of motivation. But more often, "the basic concepts of reading, writing and arithmetic are not being taught."

Barton suggested that teachers also be required to take the tests and that those who fail should be laid off, "regardless of tenure."

But Doug Wessen, a psychologist with the Juneau school system, held the view expressed by a majority of the people testifying: that a delay in the effective date is appropriate.

Wessen also questioned whether the exit exam is the best way to go. He said he's concerned that the way the plan is set up, "a child could pass all of his or her classes but not pass a test and not get a diploma."

Reporter Martha Bellisle can be reached at mbellisle@adn.com and 907-586-1531.

Close Window

Competency Test Areas Needing Attention

Discuss w/
Con on Monday

- 1) Opportunity to Learn
- 2) Special Education Students' Legal Rights To:
 - a) receive education through I.E.P.'s that aligned with the state performance standards
 - b) take tests with appropriate accommodations
- 3) Transfer Students Coming to Alaska Late in their Student Careers:
- 4) Excessive Difficulty of the Math Portion of the Test
- 5) Time for District Alignment with State Performance Standards
- 6) Time for Classroom Alignment with State Performance Standards
- 7) Requirement for each students to take the Competency Test multiple times between 10th and 12th grades to provide a diagnostic record in high school and to focus remedial efforts.
- 8)

Goals of the Competency Test

- 1) Base education in all school districts on adopted state performance standards.
- 2) Assure students, parents, teachers, business and university that graduating seniors have at least the minimum competencies Alaskans expect them to have in reading, writing and arithmetic/mathematics.
- 3) Improve, on a continuous basis, education in all Alaska's schools.
- 4) Require all students to demonstrate their mastery of the State Performance Standards and provide a fair and legal method for them to do so.
- 5) Reward and recognize achievement.
- 6)

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4 ~~Page 2, line 2, following "society":~~
5 ~~Insert ", and~~ *IT IS MY INTENT that*
6 (4) ~~that~~ ^{any} each student achieve competency in the English language before
7 graduation from high school and that the waiver process enacted under ~~AS 409.075~~ and the
8 regulations governing the issuance of a waiver for the secondary student competency
9 examination adopted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
10 should not be used to allow a diploma to be given to a student who lacks a minimal level of
11 competency in the English language"

APPROVED for
RELEASE
Conley 3/17/01
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I did NOT OFFER this AS AN AMENDMENT
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LEGISLATURE and/or the ADMINISTRATION.
Conley