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During Session, January - May:
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During Interim, June - December:
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Senator Loren Leman

SB 128 – Public School Exit Exam Transition Period

Witness List

Wednesday February 7, 2001
1:30p.m.

Senator Loren Leman, SPONSOR

Juneau

Carl Rose, Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards

Juneau

Steve Cathers, Superintendent
Valdez School District

Valdez LIO
contact: 907-835-4357

Carol Comeau, Superintendent
Anchorage School District

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FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB 128
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development
 Title: An Act relating to atwo-year transition for imple- BRU: Teaching & Learning Support
mentation of the public high school competency examination Component: Quality Schools
 Sponsor: Senator Leman
 Requester: Senate HESS Component Number: 2147

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2002 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill amends the effective date of the high school graduation qualifying examination from 2002 to 2004. The bill also provides for the designation of endorsements for high school diplomas in the areas of the exam that a student has successfully passed. This bill would not require any costs for the department.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson
 Division: Teaching & Learning Support
 Approved by: Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education
 Agency: Department of Education & Early Development

Phone 465-8727
 Date/Time 3/2/01 12:00 AM
 Date 2/2/01



Senator Loren Lemman

Sponsor Statement – SB 128 Public School Exit Exam Transition Period

“An Act relating to a two-year transition for implementation of the public high school competency examination as a graduation requirement; and providing for an effective date.”

SB 128 amends the existing statute regarding secondary pupil competency testing. It maintains the mandatory testing date of 2002 but extends the date for required passage in order to receive a high school diploma until 2004.

The enabling statutory provision in 1997 requiring passage of the competency exam was intended to establish a standard of academic proficiency as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma. **SB 128** maintains this standard.

Existing law (AS 14.03.075) that takes effect on January 1, 2002, requires a pupil to pass a competency exam in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics before issuance of a secondary school diploma. A pupil who fails to pass the examination and no longer attends school receives a certificate of attendance from the school district indicating the years of attendance and nonpassage of the competency exam and a statement that the student has not received a diploma.

While there has been broad support for this academic standard, following the first rounds of statewide testing there have been several questions regarding the appropriateness of the exam, and the potential legal challenges to it, especially for students with learning disabilities. In addition, because of the exceptionally low pass rate among sophomores, the first class to take the exam, many have expressed concern about the math portion of the exam.

In response to these concerns and the desire to implement a valid and appropriate competency examination, **SB128** modifies existing law to provide two more years to undertake a comprehensive and independent review of the exam's content to establish its validity and appropriateness. Beginning in 2002, students passing the competency test will receive an endorsement on their diploma and transcript identifying the subjects passed. This endorsement provision will sunset in 2004, at which time passage of all three parts of the competency test will be required before a high school diploma is awarded.

Prepared by Paul Roetman, Legislative Aide to Senator Loren Lemman (907-465-3712)
Last updated: March 2, 2001

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Sectional Analysis - SB 128 Public School Exit Exam Transition Period

“An Act relating to a two-year transition for implementation of the public high school competency examination as a graduation requirement; and providing for an effective date.”

Section 1: Amends the existing effective date from January 1, 2002, to January 1, 2004, requiring each public high school pupil demonstrate academic proficiency by passing a high school competency examination before receiving a public high school diploma.

Section 2: Establishes a two-year transition period beginning January 1, 2002, and ending December 31, 2003, requiring every public high school pupil to take the high school competency examination before graduating.

Provides that beginning in 2002, a pupil who successfully passes any of the three examination areas will receive an endorsement on his/her diploma and transcript identifying the subjects passed. Subject areas not passed will not be identified on the transcript or diploma. This section sunsets December 31, 2003.

Section 3: January 1, 2002, is the effective date for the two-year transition.

1.11 EXTEND IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSEQUENCES OF THE HSGQE TO 2004

The Association of Alaska School Boards urges the Alaska Legislature and Department of Education & Early Development to extend the implementation of consequences of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam to 2004 (although continue testing) [AS 14.03.075].

Rationale: This is a simple issue of fairness. The public needs assurance that students have been given the opportunity to receive instruction through a curriculum that has been aligned to the state's performance standards. To expect students to pass the high stakes exit exam without an aligned curriculum is not fair. In this instance, to withhold a student's diploma does not hold schools accountable, but it may unfairly penalize certain students who haven't been adequately prepared to meet the standards.

This extension would allow two more years for districts to align curriculum, teaching strategies and assessments with performance standards. It would also allow two more years to prepare teachers in necessary understanding and teaching skills. Additional benefits are that it would provide more time to build parent/community support and assistance in preparing students, and provide remediation time to better prepare for the consequences of the exam.

Adopted 2000