

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

2363

HOUSE and SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE FILES, 2001 - 2002

Subject: railroad
Date: Sat, 24 Mar 2001 12:18:23 -0900
From: Tim and Fil <feli@gci.net>
To: Senator_Drue_Pearce@legis.state.ak.us
CC: braked@akrr.com

Dear Senator:

I read with interest the article in the Daily News on 3/23/01 regarding the railroad extension to the airport and the subsequent realignment through certain neighborhoods. The railroad currently goes right by my house and I was wanting to know more specifically about what neighborhoods for which the realignment is proposed. Needless to say, if it affects any neighborhood at all, I think the public should have a right to speak about the issue in an informed manner.

I am rarely in favor of government intervention but I think this time the Senate is correct in its SB123.

Thank you,
Fil Spiegel
I Vote!
feli@gci.net

Subject: Alaska Railroad bill
Date: Sat, 24 Mar 2001 12:05:49 -0900
From: Ann Rittal <ann@timrittal.com>
Organization: the Tim Rittal team and Lakeside B&B
To: Senator_Drue_Pearce@legis.state.ak.us

Thank you for introducing this bill. I think what they have decided to do with the airport is a travesty, unnecessary, and a total boondoggle for the builders. I also think it is a hidden agenda by the big out-of-state tour companies to get their clients around town without having to pay for it. Please continue to see this bill through.

Thank you. Ann Rittal, constituent

--
Tim and Ann Rittal

the Tim Rittal team
Lakeside Bed & Breakfast
at RE/MAX Properties, Anchorage, AK
on the shores of Sand Lake

Subject: Senate Bill 123
Date: Wed, 28 Mar 2001 08:08:58 -0900
From: Paul Jendryk <nl7pj@gci.net>
To: Senator_Drue_Pearce@legis.state.ak.us

I support this bill. It is important to have some legislative oversight of the ARR.

Paul Jendryk
6320 Lost Cir
Anchorage AK 99502
248-5312

Alaska State Legislature

During Interim: (June - Dec.)
716 West 4th Avenue, Suite 500
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2133
(907) 269-0200
Fax (907) 269-0204



During Session: (Jan. - May)
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-4993
Fax (907) 465-3872

Senator Drue Pearce

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SB 123: Legislative Approval For Railroad Facilities

Senate Bill 123 requires the Alaska Railroad Corporation to obtain legislative approval before the design and construction of major projects impacting communities. The bill will require the ARRC to obtain legislative approval for facilities having an estimated cost greater than \$5,000,000, and for major railroad realignment projects through communities having an estimated cost greater than \$10,000,000.

SB 123 has been introduced in response to the Alaska Railroad Corporation's multimillion dollar rail station project at the Ted Stevens International Airport. The ARRC received direct federal appropriations for the project. There was no input or coordination with the Alaska State Legislature prior to the design of this project. More importantly, there was no public review process prior to the appropriation.

The rail station project will impact a large number of Anchorage residents. Many Anchorage residents are opposed to the depot because the ARRC will need to realign and elevate the railroad tracks near their neighborhoods. They will be greatly impacted by the increase of train traffic and noise. There are also serious concerns about the feasibility and economic practicality of the project. Lastly, federal highway funding may well be necessary to finish the project and realign the tracks to access the airport which may necessitate that the legislature to set back other road projects.

Because of the concerns with the Anchorage rail station project, requiring the ARRC to obtain legislative approval for future projects will better ensure that those Alaskan residents affected will be informed and have the opportunity for a review process in a timely manner.

RESOLUTION 01-03
SAND LAKE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL NO. 123

Whereas, we, the Sand Lake Community Council Executive Board support the orderly development of the Sand Lake area:

Whereas there needs to be a public process on large capital improvement projects by the Alaska Railroad that impact neighborhoods and roads:

Whereas the Alaska Railroad needs to be accountable to the citizens for the money it spends on capitol improvement projects:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Sand Lake Community Council Executive Board whole-heartedly supports Senator Drue Pearce in the eventual passing of Senate Bill No. 123.

Adopted on the 20th day of March, 2001, at Anchorage, Alaska, by the Sand Lake Community council Executive Board.

President
Sherri Jackson

Secretary
Becky Roth

Subject: Bill 123 dealing with the Alaska Railroad
Date: Wed, 14 Mar 2001 21:40:22 -0900
From: "Mike Miller" <biggame@alaska.net>

To: <Senator_Drue_Pearce@legis.state.ak.us>

We support bill 123. The railroad owned by the State of Alaska should have to go through the process of legislation before approving any projects over 5 million dollars. These railroad projects must have public input and acceptance; it must be for the better of all and not just for the better of the railroad.

Mike Miller, President
Portage Valley Community Council
783-2025 phone
783-2370 fax

March 20, 2001

TO: Representative Andrew Halcro

FROM: Michael and Rose Marie Citti
4641 Edinburgh Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99515

Good Morning Representative:

It was good to hear Senator Pearce and you on KENI RADIO this AM. We are writing in support of SB 123. We feel that it is important that oversight of the Alaska Railroad take place.

Sincerely:




THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES

Airport station is runaway idea

by REP. ANDREW HALCRO

The Alaska Railroad Corp.'s plan to build a \$28 million train depot at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport raises serious concerns about ridership and the financial projections.

The railroad's project analysis references a recent article in the *Railway Gazette* that notes there are dozens of rail links operating in other cities and more planned for the future. What is not mentioned is the overall disappointment of the rail-link experience. In a *Wall Street Journal* story entitled 'Airport Rail Links Misconnect With Fliers,' a recurring fact was how in many cities



alcro

the thought of racing to the airport in a speeding train has become only a dream. It says that problems from: slow trains, too many stops, not enough stops, the need for no connections, poor baggage space and infrequent service have made most of the links unattractive to travelers. Philadelphia, a city with a population 15 times that of Anchorage, has service only once every 11-hour, which makes waiting for the train longer than the drive from downtown.

The ARRC assumes that the main supporter of the \$28 million project will be cruise ship passengers. However, cruise companies will tell you that motor coach transfers are the cheapest and most efficient way to transport passengers due to their volume and varying flight times. A letter from one company states, 'the existing ARRC depot at Ship Creek is not adequate for collecting cruise passengers and

Compass Points of view from the community



their baggage," which means in addition to the \$28 million for the airport spur, the ARRC will have to invest millions more in improvements to handle cruise passengers. All of this for a market that exists for only five months of the year.

The report further states that by the year 2004, a total of 80,000 residents will be using the rail to get to the airport annually. It is assumed that these passengers would buffer the winter months to make up for the absence of summer cruise ship or charter traffic. This number represents approximately 6,600 residents per month utilizing this service. The report fails to identify how and why these 80,000 local residents are going to use airport rail service. In fact, the report goes so far as to mention that although 8,200 people work at the airport, "it appears that the schedules of workers and the locations where they live are not conducive to mass transit."

The problem lies in the fact that not all of the 8,200 people work at the terminal. Most of these employees would have to find some way to get from the depot at the airport to the front door of their businesses; some of which are located a considerable distance from the terminal.

So if not employees then whom? How about the family of four heading off for a week vacation? Once again the analysis raises questions.

The Origin and Destination Study men-

tions that residents make an estimated 36,000 one-way trips to the airport each week. It goes on to state, "However, a vast majority of these trips originate from neighborhoods or districts that are distant from rail lines and depots (existing or planned)."

The analysis concludes by stating, "airport employees travel to and from the airport at different times and live in many different areas, suggesting that ridership on any commuter line would be low at any given point in time." If you inserted the words "local residents" in place of "airport employees," the conclusion remains the same.

Additionally, the \$28 million price tag pays for only the rail station at the airport. Area tracks and roads would still need to be re-aligned for rail traffic accessing the airport. At a recent public hearing, the railroad laid out options for the track running down International Airport Road to the airport. This portion alone will require another \$18 million in improvements.

This is not the time to be building speculative projects. This rail station is not economically practical and will actually inconvenience travelers. The construction of the airport depot will result in a loss of valuable short-term parking spaces that will cause travelers to park at greater distances from the terminal. Unfortunately, all of the evidence in the world that casts serious questions on the practicality and profitability of this proposed project is probably not enough to stop the poor use of \$28 million in taxpayer dollars.

■ Andrew Halcro is a member of the state House of Representatives for the Sand Lake and Dimond High areas in Anchorage.

Airport Rail Links Misconnect With Fliers

By DANIEL MACHALARA

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
Like many travelers, Tom Hoen, of Baltimore dreams of racing to the airport aboard a fast train.

His reality: crawling to the airport aboard a slow trolley. Extended to Baltimore-Washington International Airport a couple of years ago, Baltimore's airport trolley lumbers through city streets, mixes with traffic and waits at sections of single track for trains traveling in the opposite direction to pass. Mr. Hoen, a vice president of BT Alex. Brown, could drive from his house to the airport in half an hour but prefers public transportation, which can take almost twice as long. "It's hardly a bullet train," he says.

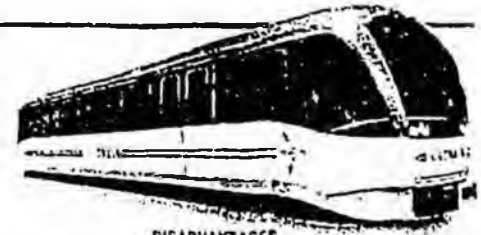
Mr. Hoen's frustration is common among passengers of the nation's airport rail links. "Compared to the potential, the American experience with air-rail links has often been quite disappointing," says Matthew Coogan, a transportation consultant in White River Junction, Vt., and a former undersecretary of transportation in Massachusetts. "Many of the systems have been cobbled together and fail to deal with the unique needs of air travelers."

Most airports were built in remote areas far from downtown and were easily reached by new highways. But the surge in air travel, airport expansions and urban sprawl changed all that, resulting in clogged roads to, from and within the airports and putting airport parking at a premium. "Travelers are forced to leave their cars at distant satellite lots and board shuttle buses to the terminals.

The rail links were envisioned as an antidote for all that, but that hasn't been the

The Trains to the Planes

New York's planned Airtrain to Kennedy Airport, shown at right, is being heralded as cheap and quick, but critics have emerged



CITY	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Allanta	Fast, frequent rides to downtown	Rail doesn't reach some suburbs
Baltimore	Direct links to downtown; new trolleys	Slow trip downtown
Boston	Station near airport, frequent service	Bus connection required
Chicago	Centralized station location at airport	Frequent local stops
Cleveland	Direct airport-rail link	Limited rail network downtown
Philadelphia	Three stations at airport	Infrequent service
St. Louis	New trains	No rail links to suburbs
Washington D. C.	Fast frequent service	No special provisions for luggage

case very often. Many of the systems follow indirect routes, share tracks with local trains or require a switch to another train or bus. In Boston, for example, travelers have to board a bus between the subway station and airport terminals.

Few of the systems make special provisions for luggage. What's more, some airports that derive revenue from their parking lots do little to encourage the links. As a result, the trains often tap less than 5% of the market of travelers going to or from airports.

"I think a rail link to the airport is a great idea," says David Gunn, who heads Toronto's transit system and ran transit systems in Philadelphia, New York and Washington. "But it's very

difficult to make it work."

Proponents insist that airport trains are often faster than autos and cabs, especially during commuting times when highways are jammed. And the trains are economical, with fares ranging from \$1.50 to \$5 a ride, compared with \$25 or more for a taxi. To demonstrate the potential of air rail links, transit planners point to successful systems in London and Hong Kong, which include features like airline counters at downtown train stations, nonstop service and luggage racks on the trains.

Amenz U.S. systems, the one linking Washington, D.C., and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport is considered among the most effective. Travelers used

Please Turn to Page B4, Column 5

Few Fliers Use Airport Rail Links

Continued From Page B1

to complain about having to walk through parking lots from the terminal to the train station—a distance of more than 1,000 feet. But in 1997, a new airline terminal serving most carriers was completed adjacent to the station, making the connection between plane and train among the most convenient in the country.

The Washington system also boasts frequent trains and an extensive rail network to downtown locations. "It has them all beat," Ken Bird, a manager at an industrial-controls company in Illinois, says of Washington's airport trains. "You can walk right from the plane to the train and get a clean, quiet and fast ride downtown."

The system linking Chicago with O'Hare International Airport also wins praise for its convenience, although it travels along a line used mainly by local riders, with frequent stops and crowded cars.

More typical is Philadelphia, where commuter trains were extended to the airport in 1985 but haven't made much headway with the traveling public. For budgetary reasons, service is confined to one train every half hour. The result: Travelers often wait longer for a train than the time it takes to drive downtown.

The Philadelphia system carries about 2,500 people a day to or from the airport—about a fifth of its capacity. "Airline travelers are accustomed to stepping out to the curb and flagging a cab," says Stephan Rosenfeld, a spokesman for Philadelphia's transit system. "We haven't been able to break that habit."

That may change. Philadelphia Airport officials, who manage the transit system, say they haven't promoted the trains in the past. A separate authority operates the trains and collects fares. But airport officials say they are now encouraging more travelers to use the train in an effort to ease airport traffic congestion. The airport has added bigger signs directing travelers to the trains and is spending \$5.5 million to build new passageways from the baggage-claim area to train platforms.

Despite the problems many cities have encountered with airport rail systems, New York, San Francisco and Portland, Ore., are developing new links. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's plans to spend \$1.5 billion to build "Airtrain" to Kennedy International Airport are already drawing fire, because they require passengers to change trains.

The Airtrain plan has also stirred opposition from airlines, which object to the

Port Authority's use of a \$3-per-passenger airport departure tax. To qualify for the funds, which are designed for on-airport improvements, the Port Authority plans to annex Airtrain's track right of way and make it part of the airport.

The drawback: Airtrain will take passengers to nearby rail stations, where travelers transfer to other trains. "They are building a second-rate system that dumps you at a remote transit hub only 20% of the way to the center city," contends George Haikalis, a transportation consultant in New York.

Port Authority officials say the system will be cheaper, faster and more reliable than and from Manhattan than cabs. They dismiss concerns about the inconvenience of changing trains. "How are you going to make something perfect for eight million people who don't live in one place?" says Port Authority spokesman Mark Haffner. "We are trying to create the best system that serves the most people."

Meanwhile, improvements to other systems are on the way. Atlanta wants to install a baggage drop-off counter at the airport train station. And in Baltimore, transit officials say they are addressing the problem of delays and plan to install special signals to give trolleys priority over cars and buses.

Baltimore has also considered making space available on its trolleys for luggage. But Wayne Jubb, a deputy director of Baltimore's transit system, says there is no rush: Trolleys to and from the airport are 70% empty. "There's plenty of room on those vehicles, even if people set the luggage behind them," Mr. Jubb says.

GLAXO WILL COME PLC

Unsuccessful Partner Search Leads to Phaseout of Unit

Glaxo Wellcome PLC said it will discontinue funding for HealthMatics Inc. after an unsuccessful search for a venture partner. HealthMatics is a Cary, N.C., health-care information systems and services company. Glaxo, a British drug maker, said HealthMatics will begin phasing out operations immediately under a plan that continues to support existing customers through 1999. The decision will affect 100 employees, according to Glaxo. HealthMatics was created in 1994 as a joint venture by Glaxo and Physician Computer Network Inc. Glaxo acquired Physician Computer Network in December 1997 and said at the time it would seek a partner.



Fairbanks Bypass Reconnaissance Study

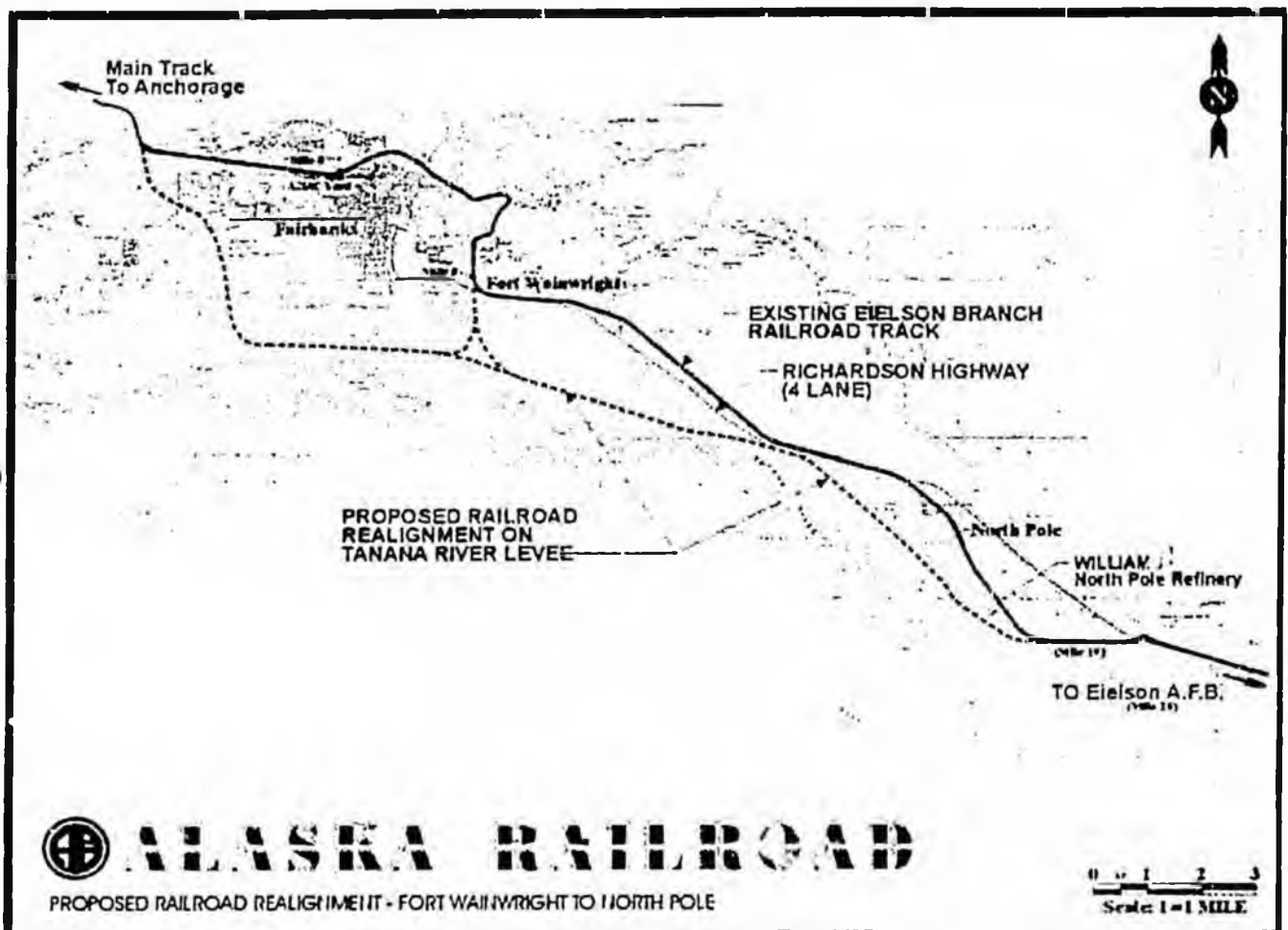
AKRR

Corp

Plan H

Proposed Project:

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) proposes to re-locate its mainline from Sheep Creek Road to the median of the Parks Highway and continue down the median until just East of the University Avenue/Parks Highway Interchange. The new alignment will move onto the Tanana River Dike and stay on the dike to Moose Pass Road Interchange.



Purpose and Need:

This project will eliminate 48 at-grade road/rail crossings. The current track alignment parallels the four lane Richardson Highway and crosses this major highway twice. It also includes many other road crossings constructed over the past several decades. Road crossings include one of the main gates to Ft. Wainwright (one of the two military bases this track serves), a main downtown road in the City of North Pole, and the primary access to North Pole High School.

Benefits:

- Closure of 48 road/rail crossings
 - Safety
 - Easier maintenance of the dike. A railroad will allow fill materials and rip rap to be moved inexpensively to maintain the dike.
 - Improvement to the North Pole community. Removing the railroad from downtown resolves conflicts with noise, pedestrian and school foot traffic, and emergency response vehicles.
 - Improved efficiency and speed of service to Ft Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base

Status:

- Reconnaissance study awarded September 6.
- Work completed by local Fairbanks firm in December, 2000.
- Project concept cost estimated between \$80 to \$95 million

[Send Alaska Railroad your Public Comments - public_comment@akrr.com](mailto:public_comment@akrr.com)

updated 03/05/00

Executive Summary

The *Market Analysis for ARRC Anchorage International Airport Rail Station* presents the results of a study of potential benefits of the new rail station at the Anchorage International Airport (AIA), the various markets that could support the station, and the marketing requirements necessary to take full advantage of the station. Appendixes to the report contain detailed information on equipment options and copies of a commuter rail survey conducted as part of the study.

The number of available markets and potential size of each market suggest that the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) can determine the amount of airport-station-related ridership by developing the necessary infrastructure, providing adequate levels of service, and marketing the service. Marketing efforts would include negotiations with primary customers such as cruise lines and tour companies, and efforts to attract independent travelers and area residents. The user groups exhibit differences in terms of frequency of service and destination. Necessary infrastructure includes port improvements and facilities to serve commuters and tour groups. The ARRC is already addressing many of these items.

Total airport-station-related ridership could exceed 200,000 passengers per year by 2004 and grow to more than 500,000 by 2024. The market with the most immediate potential is the cruise market, in which passengers require transportation between cruise ships and the airport. Rail ridership for cruise-related services could be more than 60,000 passengers per year in 2004 and exceed 75,000 per year by 2024 (assuming that 3 train sets with a capacity of 250 passengers per train are dedicated to this service). Other markets such as providing related services to tour-and-charter visitors and serving area residents traveling to the airport offer even greater potential, but marketing efforts and additional infrastructure are needed before this potential can be realized.

Airport station related ridership could exceed 100,000 travelers in the independent tourists, to group, and charter categories in 2004. In addition, the demand for rail service to the airport by area residents could exceed the expected use by cruise passengers if the necessary infrastructure and adequate levels of service were in place.

Revenues generated by transporting cruise passengers between the airport and cruise ships could exceed \$750,000 in 2004 and \$1 million in 2024. Revenues generated by other markets cannot be estimated until critical decisions related to facilities, equipment, and levels of service have been made and more is known about the markets.

The new AIA rail station should be viewed as a vital part of the transportation infrastructure in Southcentral Alaska and could be a catalyst for increased and improved tourist activity in the area. However, not all of the benefits associated with improved infrastructure can be assigned to the AIA station. Shorter travel times between cruise ships (or other places) and the airport, improved travel experiences, and other benefits are associated as much with track changes and other rail system improvements as with the AIA station itself.

The AIA station would help to promote a variety of benefits such as reduced roadway congestion, improved air quality, and postponement of the date when future roadway improvements are needed. Once the ARRC makes decisions regarding new equipment and various system improvements, revenues and other benefits can be compared with the estimated annual cost of \$300,000 for maintaining and operating the new station. In the meantime, the station can be viewed in the context of the broad tourist industry. Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) statistics show that in 1998 the travel trade brought roughly \$72 million to the Anchorage area, and conventions resulted in a positive economic impact of \$59 million. To the extent that the new rail station adds incrementally

to these values or helps increase retention of travel-related money in the Anchorage area, the value of the station could be quite significant.

In summary, ARRC decisions regarding level of service, marketing effort, and the rate at which new infrastructure is put in place are the critical factors in generating significant use of the AIA rail station. If the ARRC is sensitive to the demands of the various market segments and aggressive in meeting those demands, then passenger volumes and related revenues should be sufficient to support the new station.

1 Introduction

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) is evaluating the construction of a \$28-million intermodal rail station at the Anchorage International Airport (AIA). This report is a first step in understanding the potential benefits and marketing requirements necessary to take full advantage of the new station. The State of Alaska's \$230-million AIA Redevelopment Plan and accompanying road improvements offer ARRC the chance to combine construction of the new rail station with other physical changes at the airport and to locate the station next to the main airport terminal.

The intermodal station is one of numerous projects that are being undertaken to dramatically improve the Southcentral Alaska transportation system. Concurrently, long-range plans are being initiated for expanding commuter options into Anchorage from Girdwood and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, and market opportunities for linking rail to other modes are emerging. The new station is expected to give cruise ship passengers "port-to-airport" service, provide future commuter rail services a direct link from the main Anchorage rail terminal to the airport, and generate new opportunities for tour-and-charter companies.

Such changes would create a transportation system in Anchorage similar to systems being planned in cities around the world. A recent article in *Railway Gazette International* (June 1998) noted that there are approximately 62 airport rail links currently operating around the world, and at least 116 being built, planned, or considered. Currently there are airport rail links in London, Hong Kong, and Brussels. Links under construction include new stations in New York; San Francisco; and Sydney, Australia. These links represent a growing business in the air travel industry and reflect the growing need to connect different transportation modes.

The *Railway Gazette* article also stated that airports around the world are struggling to meet the growing demand for space and improved services. As airports become more congested, there is incentive to expand. However, the cost of expansion can be prohibitive, and airport authorities have begun to consider new ways to accommodate passengers. One alternative is remote check-in for passengers and baggage. For example, remote check-in at rail stations can reduce the demand for space at airports and reduce waiting times at ticket counters. Airport rail links also offer air travelers an attractive transportation option. Certain passengers arriving at AIA may be more accustomed to rail travel than to auto or bus. Passengers from other countries may prefer to purchase a rail ticket at a multilingual kiosk rather than exchange currencies and rent a car.

In short, the new AIA rail station is the result of market opportunities, the timing of other Southcentral Alaska transportation projects, and the need to improve the transportation system in Alaska. The station will benefit ARRC, Anchorage, AIA, and business all along the rail corridor, as well as the visitors and residents who will use it.

1.1 Purpose and Organization

This report presents the results of a market identification study for the new intermodal rail station and preliminary observations regarding the extent to which the markets can support the station. ARRC contracted with Northern Economics, Inc., in November 1998 to conduct the necessary research and analysis. The consultant team includes HDR Alaska, Inc.; and Kluherz & Associates. The purpose of the report is to provide information that will be useful to ARRC in its decisions for marketing priorities and related equipment needs for the new station. The report includes analyses of potential markets, a preliminary benefit-cost analysis for the station, observations on the station's financial feasibility, a discussion of issues that ARRC may wish to consider in its near-term marketing strategy, and an appendix containing information on equipment options for serving these markets. Available data was

supplemented by interviews with visitor industry representatives, and a survey was conducted to allow commuter rail forecasts.

The consulting team considered markets that would be available in the near term—by working with the cruise industry—and markets that could be developed in the future—for example, by offering a rail shuttle between AIA and downtown Anchorage and by offering connections with commuter rail lines.

The major market categories are the cruise industry, tour-and-charter opportunities, and commuter services. The report includes a separate analysis for each of these categories, with forecasts of potential ridership for the years 2000 through 2024.

Specific markets are identified and evaluated within each market category. For example, within the cruise industry category, there are potential markets for service between AIA and Seward or Whittier (direct connections between cruise ships and the airport), between cruise ships at Seward or Whittier and downtown Anchorage, and involving both cruise operators and smaller, established tour companies.

The following paragraphs briefly outline the report organization.

Cruise Industry Markets

The cruise industry is the first market category discussed because of the primary role it will have in supporting the AIA rail station in the near future (Section 2). When a large cruise ship docks in Seward, more than 1,500 people may need to be transported directly from the ship to AIA. Cruise lines currently use motorcoaches to transport these passengers and have expressed interest in working with ARRC. Other markets will take more time to develop and do not offer a comparable volume of potential ridership originating or ending at the AIA station.

Tour-and-Charter Industry Markets

The analysis of tour-and-charter opportunities focuses on opportunities that might have a relationship to the new AIA rail station in the near term (Section 3). Numerous opportunities exist for ARRC to work with existing tour-and-charter groups, and opportunities may exist for ARRC to design its own tour packages. In time, group tour vendors may work the AIA rail station into different tour package options.

Opportunities that do not have a clear connection (now or in the near future) to the AIA rail station are not included in this section. It may be important to note the distinction between the cruise industry and tour-and-charter opportunities. While there is some overlap between the cruise market and tour-and-charter market, there are enough differences in terms of how reservations are made, the number of passengers involved, transportation requirements for passengers, and other factors to view these markets as separate.

Commuter Rail Markets

The discussion of potential commuter rail markets in Section 4 incorporates a broader perspective than the analysis of more immediate markets. It is easy to envision a day when residents of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, Girdwood, and Seward consider the train a viable or attractive option for getting to and from the airport, but it is difficult to know when that day might come.

A regional commuter rail network needs to be established before residential demand for rail service to the airport can be considered a dependable market. Without an established commuter rail system, it is virtually impossible to analyze potential ridership or willingness to pay for rail service to the airport.

For this reason, the discussion of commuter rail markets begins with an analysis of commuter rail potential in general and then focuses on subsets of the commuter market that would relate to the AIA rail station. For example, one subset includes easy access to AIA for military base personnel and commuter services from area communities to Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Air Force Base.

Equipment Options

Equipment options are summarized and detailed technical information about these options is provided in Appendix A. The discussion shows the service items ARRC could offer on different routes with different equipment, explains how running times on different routes would vary with different equipment, and identifies other strengths and weaknesses of different options. This information is designed to help ARRC in future decisions regarding equipment purchases.

Benefit-Cost Analysis

The benefit-cost analysis takes a broad perspective to include all parts of the ARRC mission. The primary mission of ARRC is "to provide high-quality, cost-effective freight, passenger and real estate services" for its customers.¹ As a state agency, ARRC is also given the responsibility of fostering and promoting "the long-term economic growth and development of the state," and developing and implementing "plans for a transportation network."² The information available at this time does not support a detailed benefit-cost analysis. However, there are sufficient data to support an outline of major issues and identification of critical factors. These issues and factors are discussed in Section 5.

Marketing Issues

Section 6 outlines the major marketing issues related to the visitor industry markets discussed in this report. In particular, it highlights marketing strategies ARRC might consider as it moves into new market areas and expands services in existing markets. The commuter rail market is not addressed in the marketing plan outline suggested because it would not be a marketing target until a commuter rail system is implemented, and is therefore not viewed as a near-term market.

1.2 Modeling Issues and Underlying Assumptions

The forecasts for rail ridership presented in this report are based on assumptions about growth in the cruise industry and the tour-and-charter industry, acceptance of rail for regular commuting between Anchorage and the neighboring communities, and other factors. Forecasts for rail ridership in the cruise market are based on illustrative scenarios. The scenarios take into consideration a wide range of factors, including the considerable uncertainty associated with looking 25 years into the future. The scenarios were designed to show the impact on rail ridership of different potential ARRC policy decisions as well as factors beyond ARRC control. Forecasts of commuter rail passenger volumes are based on survey results.

It should be emphasized that in all cases forecasts are based on assumptions that can be considered plausible rather than simply conceivable.

Cruise market forecasts are based on scenarios that account for high, medium (base-case), and low growth rates in the Alaska cruise industry, different train set sizes, and different train utilization rates. The consultant team developed these scenarios to facilitate discussion regarding ARRC equipment

¹ From ARRC Mission Statement, as presented in ARRC RFP 98-17078.

² Alaska Statutes 42.40, Section 1, Legislative Findings and Purpose, as cited in ARRC RFP 98-17078.

purchases, ARRC operations decisions, and future cruise industry decisions. Rail ridership forecasts are presented in 5-year increments for the 25-year planning period. Multiple forecasts of rail ridership can be cumbersome when discussing the implications of different passenger volumes, because the forecast associated with each scenario must be discussed separately. Still, this burden is necessary given the degree of uncertainty associated with a 25-year planning horizon.

The approach used in this report may have resulted in conservative estimates—higher forecasts could be supported with particular assumptions and alternative scenarios. However, it should be emphasized that a goal of this report is to describe what ARRC is most likely to encounter and not just what might happen. The following items discuss reasons for this approach.

- Recent trends may not be valid over the 25-year planning period. For example, the growth rate in the number of independent travelers to Alaska has been more than 5 percent per year in the recent past. Forecasts in this report call for a growth rate of 2 to 3 percent over the next 25 years. This average allows for higher growth in the short term, but slower growth in the future because growth can be expected to slow as the market matures. In addition, on the national level the last 8 years have been unique in terms of economic history. The U.S. economy has grown steadily, inflation has not been significant, and many markets have seen unprecedented growth. Forecasts based on trends from this period should not be considered likely because the economic conditions of the last 8 years are not expected to continue. In fact, because of the length of the planning period used in this study, a recession should be considered likely sometime during the 25 years, and the effects of a recession on tourist activity taken into account.
- Forecasts for commuter rail ridership in this report are based on survey responses and estimated population growth rates. It is possible that people may be more likely or willing to use a mass transit system once they have seen the system in operation, understand how the system works, and gain confidence that they can use the system to fit their needs. No attempt has been made in this report to account for these possible behavioral changes.

The markets discussed in this report are related directly to the new AIA rail station or are part of the larger rail system and can be viewed as complementary to the new station. Where possible, the links between the markets and the new station have been explained and passenger use of the new station estimated. It should be emphasized that in all cases passenger forecasts are based on the best evidence available and are intended to provide ARRC with numbers for planning purposes—numbers that ARRC can view as dependable and other researchers should be able to duplicate.

1.3 Market Analysis Summary Table

Table 1 provides a brief encapsulation of the rail ridership forecasts developed in sections 2, 3, and 4 of this report. The table focuses on potential ridership using the AIA rail station.

The cruise market estimates are based on an assumption of two train trips per vessel call. If the ARRC were to purchase additional equipment to provide more trips, the cruise market ridership estimates would be higher. The tour and charter market is composed of several segments including cruise-and-tour, other package and inde-package, and independents. Interviews with industry representatives provide widely varying opinions on the potential use of rail by the tour and charter market. The range of estimates for the other package and inde-package market segments suggests that the ARRC might be able to capture 10 to 30 percent of these visitors for rides on the rail system. Industry representatives anticipate that the ARRC could capture 10 to 20 percent of the independent travelers to Southcentral Alaska on travel to and from Seward or otherwise using the AIA rail station. Approximately 5 to 10 percent of the conventions and meetings held in Anchorage could result in bookings destined to or from the rail station. The cruise-and-tour market can provide additional

ridership between the AIA and Seward or Whittier, but train capacity may not be adequate to transport the cruise passengers that are likely to use the rail, so the potential ridership associated with the cruise-and-tour market segment is not included in Table 1. If additional capacity were available, the cruise-tour segment could account for about 10,000 passengers in 2004, ranging to almost 70,000 passengers in 2024.

There is a considerable amount of uncertainty associated with the estimated number of residents that might travel to the airport from the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and Girdwood. Residents of those areas provided information on the number of trips they make to the airport, but information was not sought on the price they were willing to pay for rail service or the preferred time of travel. Table 1 assumes that rail service could capture 25 percent of trips to the airport that respondents make. The total number of passengers using the AIA rail station is anticipated to range between approximately 240,000 and 370,000 in the early years of operation and increase over time.

The commuter estimates reflect a regional rail commuter system between the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, Girdwood, and the rail depot near Ship Creek in Anchorage. The estimates reflect ridership levels with a one-way trip fare of \$5.00. Commuter passengers represent the largest portion of future rail ridership.

Table 1. Base-Case Rail Ridership Summary by Major Market Category

Market	Rail Ridership by Year (Number of Passengers in Thousands)				
	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024
Cruise	62	72	77	77	76
Tour-and-Charter	100-230	120-280	140-330	160-380	170-440
Resident Travel to AIA	80	90	100	120	130
Total AIA Related Ridership	242-372	282-442	317-507	357-577	376-646
Commuter	1,200	1,350	1,550	1,770	2,010

Note: The cruise estimates are based on a train capacity of 250 passengers.

**SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT
First Committee of Referral**

DATE: 3/1/01

FURTHER: Finance

Date of 5-Day Notice: 3/14/01
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 3/23/01

Transportation Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 123

LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL:RAILROAD FACILITIES

"An Act relating to legislative approval for the design and construction of facilities of the Alaska Railroad Corporation."

and recommends:

- be replaced with CS SB 123 (TRIA)
- adopt previous CS ()
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by Committee
- further referral to Committee

- Senate Bill:**
 same title
 new title
- House Bill:**
 same title
 technical title
 new: SCR #

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#
DCED	3/21/01	0		1

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
<i>Adrian Taylor</i>			✓	
<i>[Signature]</i>			✓	
CHAIR: <i>John J. Courtney</i>	✓			

SB 123

Subject: railroad
Date: Sat, 24 Mar 2001 12:18:23 -0900
From: Tim and Fil <feli@gci.net>
To: Senator_Drue_Pearce@legis.state.ak.us
CC: braked@akrr.com

Dear Senator:

I read with interest the article in the Daily News on 3/23/01 regarding the railroad extension to the airport and the subsequent realignment through certain neighborhoods. The railroad currently goes right by my house and I was wanting to know more specifically about what neighborhoods for which the realignment is proposed. Needless to say, if it affects any neighborhood at all, I think the public should have a right to speak about the issue in an informed manner.

I am rarely in favor of government intervention but I think this time the Senate is correct in its SB123.

Thank you,
Fil Spiegel
I Vote!
feli@gci.net

SB 123

Subject: Alaska Railroad bill
Date: Sat, 24 Mar 2001 12:05:49 -0900
From: Ann Rittal <ann@tim:ittal.com>
Organization: the Tim Rittal team and Lakeside B&B
To: Senator_Drue_Pearce@legis.state.ak.us

Thank you for introducing this bill. I think what they have decided to do with the airport is a travesty, unnecessary, and a total boondoggle for the builders. I also think it is a hidden agenda by the big out-of-state tour companies to get their clients around town without having to pay for it. Please continue to see this bill through.

Thank you. Ann Rittal, constituent

--

Tim and Ann Rittal

the Tim Rittal team
Lakeside Bed & Breakfast
at RE/MAX Properties, Anchorage, AK
on the shores of Sand Lake

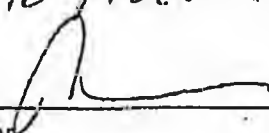


ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the S FINANCE
 Committee on SB123 Committee Name Dated 3/28/01
Bill / Subject

As a North Pole City Councilman and Private Citizen, I urge the committee to reject the "Linda Anderson" amendment requiring legislative approval for AKRR projects of \$50 million. Apparently the motivation for such unnecessary legislative oversight is a desire to maintain an "aesthetic" quality to what is already a major transportation corridor but at the expense of real life-and-limb safety issues ^{everywhere else in the community,} I do NOT support doing one part of the project while leaving another section in limbo as that may jeopardize the AKRR's ability to obtain funding for any of the project. I DO support striking the amendment and allowing the EIS process to determine any corrective actions or remedies and allowing the public process to weigh in during the process. Please remove this unnecessary legislative structure and permit AKRR to proceed on schedule. Thank you.

SIGNED:

 DOUG BRASEN
 Testifier

Self
 Representing

1003 Shirley Turnaround North Pole 488-7810
 Address / Phone Number

SB

130

SFIN

FILE

SB 130

**was referred to the
Senate Finance
Committee**

**No hearing was held
on this bill**

SB

133

HFIN

FILE

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: CSSB 133(HES)
 (S) Publish Date: 3/20/01

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development
 Title: An Act relating to a two-year transition for imple- BRU: Teaching & Learning Support
mentation of the public high school competency examination Component: Quality Schools
 Sponsor: Senate HESS
 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	48.0					
Contractual	17.9					
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	65.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

FUND SOURCE	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	65.9					
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	65.9	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	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
 The legislation amends AS 14.03.075 to allow a governing body to grant a waiver of the competency exam requirement based on criteria established by the State Board of Education & Early Development (SBOEED) to develop the waiver, the SBOEED will engage the Alaskan public through a series of face-to-face regional meetings and teleconferences. Meetings and teleconferences will be advertised statewide. During FY03, the SBOEED will draft the waiver parameters to fulfill the reporting requirements for the January 2003 report to the legislature. The SBOEED will then promulgate regulations delineating the waiver process requirements.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson, Deputy Director Phone 465-8727
 Division: Teaching & Learning Support Date/Time 3 16 01 12:00 AM
 Approved by: Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education Date 03 16 2001
 Agency: Department of Education & Early Development

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

w/d

#1

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE BUNDE

TO: HCS CSSB 133(HES)

1 Page 1, line 3:

2 Delete "certain reports"

3 Insert "a report"

4

5 Page 2, line 5:

6 Delete "sec. 7"

7 Insert "sec. 6"

8

9 Page 5, line 31, through page 6, line 16:

10 Delete all material.

11

12 Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

13

14 Page 7, line 13, following "(1)":

15 Insert "a competency examination waiver process for students who enter the school
16 system late and for other students with rare or unusual circumstances that merit a waiver;

17 (2)"

18

19 Page 7, line 14:

20 Delete "(2)"

21 Insert "(3)"

22

23 Page 7, line 17:

24 Delete "(3) evaluating the process described under (2)"

circumstances...

- 1 Insert "(4) evaluating the process described under (3)"
- 2
- 3 Page 7, lines 18 - 25:
- 4 Delete all material.
- 5
- 6 Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.
- 7
- 8 Page 7, line 28:
- 9 Delete "sec. 11"
- 10 Insert "sec. 9"

SB 133

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: HCS CSSB 133(HES)

By: *Lanier*

#2 / Moved
waiting
Held vote
Adopted

Page 2, following line 13:

Insert a new subsection to read:

“(d) It is the intent of the legislature that the Department of Education and Early Development, through its existing federally required monitoring program of district special education programs, review the potential for an IEP team’s inappropriate lowering of IEP goals and objectives for the purpose of providing a diploma to a student who has not achieved the State performance standards to the maximum extent practicable and take appropriate corrective action.

Page 3, lines 11-20:

Delete all material and insert:

“(1) a student who is a child with a disability and who does not achieve a passing score on the examination required under (a) of this section is eligible to receive a diploma if the student successfully completes an alternative assessment program required by the student’s individualized education program or required in the education plan developed for the student under 29 U.S.C. 794; an alternative assessment program must, to the maximum extent possible, conform to state performance standards established for the competency examination required under (a) of this section;”

Page 4, following line 8:

Insert new subsections to read:

(f) A student shall receive an endorsement on the student’s diploma and transcript identifying the areas of the examination successfully passed.

(g) The department shall by regulation establish uniform standards for an alternative assessment program required under (c)(1) of this section. The alternative assessment program required under (c)(1) of this section applicable to an individual student may not be changed after February 1 of the student's junior year of study."

Reletter the following subsection accordingly.

Page 7, line 13, following "diploma":

Delete ";

Insert ".

Page 7, lines 14-17:

Delete all material.

W/P

3

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: H CS CSSB 133 (HESS)

BY: Representative Croft

1) Page 1, Line 4 after "schools" INSERT

"; relating to the base student allocation used in the formula for state funding of public education"

2) Insert 2 new Sections to read:

"Sect ___ AS 14.17.470 is amended to read:

Sec. 1417.470. Base student allocation. The base student allocation is \$4,085[\$3940]"

"Sect ___ This section takes effect July 1, 2001."



Alaska State Legislature

House Special Committee on Education
Representative Con Bunde, Chair

State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(800) 892-4843 (907) 465-4843 (phone)
(907) 465-3871 (fax)
Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us

Brian Potts
Joe Green
Peggy Wilson
Gary Stevens
Reggie Lantz
Gretchen Guess

STATEMENT OF EXPLANATION HCS for CSSB 133 (HES) Version "T"

HCS for CSSB 133 (HES) Version "T" is a combination of the Senate-passed version of SB 133 and the Education Committee's HB 94. It maintains accountability for the State Performance Standards. It also addresses the public's concerns about opportunity to learn, children with disabilities, and students who transfer into an Alaskan high school from another state. The work that has gone into this effort, by both the Senate and the House to date, is intended to make the High School Competency Test fair to all students and legally defensible.

This bill includes the following provisions:

- delays the effective date of the High School Competency Test until February 1, 2004;
- the Legislature's commitment to improving education through the State Performance Standards and intent that the High School Competency Test is part of an evolving process;
- the student must demonstrate mastery of the State Performance Standards in reading, English and math in order to receive a diploma, or have passed a competency test in another state;
- a waiver could be granted to students who transfer to an Alaskan high school or who has rare or unusual circumstances and who has satisfied the state performance standards to the maximum extent possible;
- if a student cannot demonstrate mastery of the standards, he/she would receive a Certificate of Achievement, which would note which portions of the test the student had passed, his/her attendance record, and any other qualifications the district felt were appropriate;
- special education students may demonstrate mastery by a combination of passing the test without accommodations, with accommodations, or through a portfolio of work;
- a requirement that the Department of Education will provide the Legislature with an annual report showing indicators of the progress that schools are making toward high student achievement;
- rewards students, between 2002 and 2004, for passing the High School Competency Test; and
- asks the department to make recommendations to the Legislature regarding an appeals process and portfolios.
- asks the department to report to the Legislature on the proposed criteria and procedures for waivers.

Added Justification for an Extended Delay in the High School Qualifying Exam

Submitted by Mary Miller P.O. Box 598 Nome, AK 99762 4/22/01
Ph: 907 443 2372 e-mail: mary_m@nome.net

An excerpt of an article entitled "Teaching/Learning Across Cultures: Strategies for Success" by Ray Barnhardt, published in Sharing Our Pathways Vol. 2 Issue 3 Summer 1997 (A Newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative)

"How Do You Determine What Has Been Learned? The question of what constitutes success is difficult to answer under any educational circumstance, but it is especially complex in cross-cultural situations. Different people can exhibit competence in different ways, and when cultural differences are added to the mix, the ways can multiply dramatically. In addition to determining what it is we want students to learn, there is the task of determining how it will be measured. Not everything we want students to learn lends itself to easy and reliable measurements within the timeframe that schools expect to see results. On top of all this, we have the issue of cultural bias in everything from the instruments we use to the way we use them.

One of the most important considerations in this arena is to recognize that there are multiple forms and ways of displaying intelligence, and therefore, we need to provide multiple avenues through which students can demonstrate their competence. Recent studies indicate that there are at least seven prominent forms of intelligence, with each individual, as well as clusters of people, having strengths in some forms and weaknesses in others. These include potential aptitudes in linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence (see *The Unschooled Mind*, by Howard Gardner, 1991). The problem is that schools tend to rely almost exclusively on the first two (linguistic and logical-mathematical) as the basis for measuring academic success, leaving other forms of intelligence largely on the sidelines. While you as a teacher are not in a position to unilaterally revamp the schooling enterprise to more fully incorporate the full range of intelligences, you are in a position to recognize them in your students and to provide a variety of avenues for them to access what you are teaching. At the same time, you can incorporate some of the more culturally adaptive modes of assessing student performance, such as portfolios, exhibitions, demonstrations and productions. Through these more flexible and responsive approaches to assessment, it is possible to officially recognize the various forms of intelligence and accommodate cultural differences at the same time."

Members of the Finance Committee,

4-18-01

I would like this letter to be entered into the written record on HCS CSSB 133.

My name is Dr William Pfeifer and I currently sit as a school board member in Ketchikan. The following comments are my own and do not represent any other entity. I would ask that you also review my earlier comments on this issue.

I have a daughter who was recently identified as having a reading disability and now has to have all her textbooks available on tape. This wasn't addressed until this year, while she was in college. WAY TO LATE!!! Along with all the kids not functioning at grade level, I want to remind you that there are still many above grade level that are not being appropriately addressed. We cannot afford to lower our standards further. I would ask that you defeat any offered amendments to HCS CSSB 133/ that lower standards and diminish our competency exam. Please defeat amendments that create any sort of special alternative assessments for our disabled kids. Those kids cannot be left out of BASIC competency expectations. Schools and the state should RAISE THE EXPECTATIONS for our kids, not lower them! The system must then CHANGE to meet those expectations! The schools need to give all kids what they need to succeed!

There are many I have talked to that suggest that the Legislature and the DEED want to give an easy "out" to districts by allowing a SPED Diploma, waiver, or alternative assessment. It has been suggested to me that this is so you do not have to fund and provide the training, programs and methodology changes that may be needed for appropriate intervention and the "opportunity to learn" to get all kids to succeed. I don't believe this is the case, but it may be the lasting impression depending on your actions.

Since I am of Alaska Native decent (Tlingit), I read with special interest a report from OSEP that talks about the disproportionate representation of minority students in special education. In fact the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the U.S. Office for Civil Rights (OCR) have three concerns about disproportionate representation: (a) Students may be unserved or receive services that do not meet their needs. (b) Students may be misclassified or inappropriately labeled. (c) Placement in special education classes may be a form of discrimination.

Reducing disproportionate representation is a high priority for both offices and for many groups and associations that represent ethnic minorities and/or special education. While I don't necessarily agree with everything in the report I do agree with their statement that for most children referred for evaluation, academic failure is related to problems in learning to read. They suggest that the student's general education program use instructional strategies appropriate for the individual, and that they be adjusted to address the student's area of difficulty.

We know that a large segment of our Native population are not succeeding in our schools and are dropping out. We need to address this head on and not give reason to have more of our students classified as under SPED so they can get an easier diploma. All parents, including Natives, of the State of Alaska want their children to acquire the skills they need to succeed in a technological and competitive world.

Dr Bill Mel at the UAA apparently agrees with me that our reading cut score is at the 1st quartile as compared to standardized tests. He even classifies it at the 7th grade level. This level needs to be raised. But we also need to give parents the hammer ("opportunity to learn") to force districts to give their child appropriate diagnostic assessments, instruction, and intervention. How else can this system be held accountable. How do I hold the system accountable for failing to diagnose and intervene with my daughters reading problem in a timely manner. She will have to live with the results throughout her life. Every year you delay, every standard you choose not to appropriately measure, will add to the number of kids you continue to let out in the world unprepared. We have iatrogenic disabilities in our current educational system. It is time to leave no child behind. Give them the opportunity!

Dr Bill

Dr William Pfeifer
2901 Baranof Ave
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
907-225-9090
family@ptialaska.net

URGENT! Please, don't cheat our children!

Subject: URGENT! Please, don't cheat our children!

Date: Thu, 15 Mar 2001 21:01:35 -0900

From: Barbara Lefler <lefler@alaska.net>

To: Senator_Lyda_Green@legis.state.ak.us, Senator_Loren_Leman@legis.state.ak.us,
Senator_Jerry_Ward@legis.state.ak.us, Senator_Bettye_Davis@legis.state.ak.us,
Senator_Gary_Wilken@legis.state.ak.us, Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Joe_Green@legis.state.ak.us, Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Vic_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Honorable Legislators,

We are parents of a student in the graduating class of 2002! Neal has an IEP. We are emphatically opposed to the language of SB 133.

If the 2% of the students who are developmentally disabled and have to take the alternative assessment want IEP diplomas, let them have it.

However, the other 98% of the students (including our son) with cognitive abilities want to be held to the same standard as their peers! Our children are capable of achieving if they are provided with an appropriate education. We parents already have to fight for our children's education. By taking away their high expectations and by stripping them of their rights to use state standards and benchmarks, there is no motivation for the schools to provide an appropriate education. We are tired of fighting. Please, don't cheat our children out of their right to achieve and graduate with their peers.

Sincerely,

Barb and Doug Lefler

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Interim:

600 East Railroad Avenue
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
(907) 376-3370
(907) 376-3157 Fax

Session:

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-6600
(907) 465-3805 Fax

SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE SENATOR LYDA GREEN, CHAIR

SPONSOR STATEMENT CS SENATE BILL 133(HES)

CSSB 133 (HES) focuses on three main goals:

1. Continue giving the exam, thus requiring responsibility and accountability;
2. Ensure the exams test knowledge of essential skills and that students taking the exam as seniors have been taught the appropriate material; and
3. Address provisions for special education/disabled students and extraordinary situations.

Although the existing exit exam law has effected positive change to Alaska's education efforts, several problems with the exam have been identified over the last several years. CSSB 133(HES) addresses these problems by delaying the implementation of denying diplomas for failing the exam until 2004, by creating a carefully administered waiver program for extraordinary situations and by adding language that would allow students participating in an "individual education plan" the ability to earn a diploma.

Currently, some students are being tested on skill sets they are not required to know by state statute and/or by local school districts, on information they have never been taught, and they will be denied a diploma if they fail the exam. Additionally, content review committees, especially in mathematics, did not develop tests for those essential skills we expect students to have when they graduate. CSSB 133 (HES) provides the department with two additional years to resolve this serious matter. During this two year period, CSSB 133(HES) requires that students take the exam and that areas of the exam they successfully pass be shown on their diplomas and transcripts.

Also, current law makes no provision for students with an IEP. Consequently, students with an IEP would be denied the opportunity to earn a diploma. CSSB 133(HES) addresses this inequity by ensuring students with an IEP have the same opportunities as students without special education needs.

Additionally, the current law provides no flexibility for the department to consider extraordinary situations such as illness or military transfer students. CSSB 133(HES) addresses this issue by creating a waiver system. The legislation requires the department and the board of education to develop the criteria and procedures for such a waiver and then return to the legislature to report on their proposed regulations by January 31, 2003.

In short, though CS for Senate Bill 133 (HES) is relatively short and simple, it is also the only legislation introduced this year that comprehensively addresses the problems expressed to the Senate HESS Committee. CSSB 133(HES) is reasonable legislation designed to enhance current competency exam laws so that Alaska's children can fully benefit from their educational efforts.

SENATOR LOREN LEMAN, VICE-CHAIR
SENATOR JERRY WARD, SENATOR GARY WILKEN, SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS



PARENTS

Families Assisting Families of Children With Disabilities

To: Representative Fred Dyson
 Fax: 465-4587

As a whole PARENTS, Inc. supports SB 133 and its purpose.

We support the addition of the waiver process to allow for an additional means of obtaining a diploma. We also applaud the removal of the words "Certificate of Attendance" for those who do not meet the criteria for a diploma.

This bill provides for several things that are necessary for students with disabilities including:

- Recognizing that after taking the test, the IEP team may determine that re-testing is inappropriate.
- Explicitly outlining the methods by which students with disabilities can receive a diploma (passing the examination, passing with accommodations, or demonstrating through a portfolio).

I worry, however, this appears to mean that an IEP team cannot ask for a waiver in certain unusual circumstances. Alaska Department of Education and Early Development has currently determined that their "alternate examination" through portfolio work can only be for the lowest functioning 2% of students with disabilities. This ignores those students who may not qualify for the portfolio assessment, but also may not be able to pass the examination, even with accommodations. I also do not believe that the requirement of students examined through a portfolio needing to have mastery of state performance standards is what is sought by parents of children with disabilities. Parents around the state have made it clear that they would like such a method to be able to show general competency within the student's abilities, recognizing that they will not be able to meet the same performance standards as regular education students but have still shown that they have performed to their maximum level of potential. Parents believe strongly that these students should still be entitled to a diploma through alternate examination means based on individualized criteria, even if they cannot master the state performance standards.

Examples given by parents include psychological disorders such as extreme test anxiety, and profound deafness where the student's native language is ASL and English is only learned through English-as-a-second-language methods (the majority of

4743 E. Northern Lights Blvd., Anchorage, AK 99508
 (907) 337-7678 ♦ Fax (907) 337-7671 ♦ TTY (907) 337-7629 ♦ Toll-Free in Alaska: 1-800-478-7678
 E-mail: parents@parentsinc.org ♦ Web: www.parentsinc.org

A Non-Profit Corporation

language is learned through casual listening and through phonetics, neither of which is available to deaf students). Deaf individuals usually do not obtain a high-school level English level until well after high school, but are completely functional citizens in our society through sign language.

The bill allows for waivers that might be able to remedy this situation, however it states that it is only for rare or unusual circumstances. I would prefer that the words "rare and unusual" be removed (or at least the word "rare"). I also worry that the "governing body" might not be appropriate to all types of requests, especially if they relate to students with disabilities. This point, however, may have to wait for the department's proposed regulations. I like the provision that requires the department's regulations for this bill to be reported to the Legislature.

If anything, I would wish that this bill contained some process or assurances that students with disabilities would be able to receive the maximum effort possible to ensure that they at least have a chance to try and pass the examination and get a diploma. PARENTS, Inc. has listened to and helped countless parents of children with disabilities who struggle with school districts to get even the minimum services required under federal special education law. Many more do not know their rights and their children are not receiving an adequate education and have even less of a chance of passing the examination.

By moving the date back and making several other changes you have greatly improved the prospects of regular education students and the ability of school districts to change their curricula to ensure the success of those in regular education classes, but little is in the bill to ensure that students with disabilities will be able to achieve higher standards.

Sincerely,



Tim Weiss
Program Director

Subject: SB133

Date: Wed, 18 Apr 2001 11:18:08 -0800

From: "Eric & Kristi Holta" <kholta@gci.net>

To: <Representative_Bill_Williams@legis.state.ak.us>

Eric J. Holta

22724 Knik Vista Street

Chugiak, AK 99567

Dear Representative Williams:

I'm a lifelong Alaskan and have been teaching students with special needs within the Anchorage School District for 8 1/2 years. I'm writing to you to express my deep concern regarding the horrific changes proposed to SB 133.

I have no problem with setting high standards and goals for students or with holding us educators accountable in educating children. I welcome the idea and believe it is long overdue. I am, however, struggling with the changes made to SB 133. After reading the new version of SB 133 it appears to me that it is closer to what we currently have than it is to the original proposal. What is the difference between students passing a test based on state standards and putting together a portfolio that meet state standards? That is not an accommodation/modification, nor does it take into account the real differences in learning styles and effort put into learning. I believe this bill, as changed, does more harm than good. As a professional I'm extremely disappointed in this huge step backward. It appears to me that it falls short of meeting the intent and letter of the law concerning students with learning disabilities.

We must recognize that for many children, it is **not** a lack of effort, poor teachers, bad parenting or even over-sized classes. While these problems do exist, for many, learning is a matter of an individual's ability to master algebra or geometry, or their ability to read and write at the high school level. Some people do not, and never will, have the ability to master all the academics taught in school--they are cognitively different from "the norm." **This is neither their fault nor the fault of anyone else.** Many of these people are smart, hard working, enthusiastic, outgoing, energetic and they want to learn. We should be encouraging them and giving them options, not penalizing them for being different.

All of us know someone who fits into the category described above. Someone who, no matter what is done, will only go so far towards mastering the entire curriculum as outlined in the exit exam. These people are everywhere. Some are business owners or managers, legislators and other prominent members of our communities. What would have become of them had they been denied their diplomas? Some may have dropped out and succumbed to drugs, crime, and a life totally different than what it is today.

SB 133 as proposed by Senator Green recognizes that students learn and think with different styles and in different ways, it is a great compromise. The plan is impressive because it allows for setting high standards and at the same time recognizes that students operate on different levels of ability. It does not let kids off the hook just because they have a disability but allows

for the development of individualized programs and goals. In addition it holds everyone (pupils, teachers, and parents) accountable for setting and reaching goals, no more excuses. I've reviewed quite a few plans from different states and this is by far the best. This plan proves that you can have your cake and eat it.

If the aim is truly to better prepare our students for the future we should be giving them more options in stead of less. SB 133 as introduced by Senator Green does this and it holds everyone accountable. I am not advocating that we enable students by passing them on. I truly believe in accountability. However, we need to encourage students to stay in school and give them options when appropriate, we should not be discriminating against them because they are different. To put all students into the same category by having them pass "a" test is simply wrong. Hundreds of students will be left behind each year as a result of changes made to SB 133. Most work hard at school, are involved in their community and have bright futures. To deny them a diploma based on a test is not only cheating them but our communities as well.

The changes being proposed by Bunde and company is an atrocious miscarriage of justice. For the sake of Alaska's future I hope you will not let this happen and restore SB 133 to it's original version. If possible please include this letter as matter of record when considering SB 133.

I would be more than happy to discuss with you in-depth this extremely important issue. I look forward to hearing from you at the address above, via e-mail at eholta@yahoo.com, or via telephone at (907) 688-1008. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely Yours,

Eric J. Holta

Subject: exit exams

Date: Wed, 4 Apr 2001 13:18:38 -0800

From: Leilani Knight <lknight@ccthita.org>

To: "Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Children with disabilities have the right to take exams that are structured to meet their needs for the way that they learn. They learn differently therefore exams need to be made in a way they can understand and succeed. Please understand this when you vote on the exit exam bill for our children.

Subject: High School Graduation Qualifying Exam

Date: Wed, 04 Apr 2001 14:03:00 -0800


From: Richard Rainery <rainery@pobox.alaska.net>

**To: Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us**

Dear Representatives Porter, Dyson, Wilson, Stevens, and Guess:
Attached you will find a copy of a resolution concerning the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam adopted by the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB) earlier this year.

The AMHB strongly believes that all students with disabilities should have the opportunity to earn a diploma based on fair assessment and recognition of their achievements. We support an exit exam. We urge the Legislature to allow students with disabilities the accommodations necessary to tackle such an exam and to succeed on it to the best of their abilities. Success, as for other students, should take the form of a diploma. Thank you.

Richard Rainery
Acting Executive Director
Alaska Mental Health Board
431 North Franklin, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801
rainery@pobox.alaska.net
907.465.4765
907.465.3079 (fax)

 HSExitExamfinal.doc	Name: HSExitExamfinal.doc Type: Microsoft Word Document (application/msword) Encoding: base64 Download Status: Not downloaded with message
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Subject: IEP Diplomas

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2001 23:12:31 -0900

From: "Cheryl" <scekstro@gci.net>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Good Morning,

I am writing to you this morning because I just got some disturbing news. I heard that there are two bills being considered by the Legislature right now which impact all students with IEP's. These bills are SB 133 and HB 94.

It is my understanding that these Bills propose that all students with IEP's receive an IEP diploma even if they are not severely disabled and are able to earn a regular diploma. All children with IEP's are not severely cognitively disabled. Many have learning disabilities that do not block them from learning, but cause them to have special needs.

I do not support a blanket IEP diploma, nor do I support implementation of a program that will label all students with learning disabilities of any kind as less than able. These Bills before you do just that and should not be allowed to pass.

I would like to ask you to consider these Bills and their long term impact carefully and to use your influence to see that the students of this State receive a fair and appropriate education and foundation for the rest of thier lives.

I thank you for your time and for your efforts on behalf of my family and our beautiful state!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Ekstrom

Mother of 7 (2 graduates of Anchorage School Dist. and 5 currently attending school therein)
Anchorage Alaska

Subject: All the kids have worked hard

Date: Tue, 3 Apr 2001 15:33:51 -0800

From: "Robert P. Conte" <rpconte@gci.net>

To: "Representative Con Bunde" <Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Lyda_Green@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>

My name is Bob Conte. I live at 517 Sixth Street in Juneau. I am the father of a son who experiences mental retardation. I appose the idea that students with severe disabilities who take any sort of alternative exam should only get a Certificate of Attendance, thereby denying them proper recognition of all the hard work they have done. It is not correct to think that one test will suit all students and will be fair in all situations.

As the treasurer of PARENTS, Inc., the Parent Training and Information Center for the State of Alaska, I have been told by staff, that they hear from hundreds of parents and teachers from numerous communities around Alaska who all believe that all students with disabilities have a right to receive a diploma if they can pass a test geared toward their special needs and fulfill their Individual Education Program goals.

I ask you to please consider the importance of receiving an educational diploma that recognizes the hard work that all students give to learning and achieving educational goals.

Thank you,

Bob Conte

Representative Fred Dyson
Fax 907-465-4587

RE: Exit Exam

Dear Representative,

I had the wonderful opportunity to be in DC during the inauguration for the Bush Administration.

I was very proud when George W. Bush announced that the cornerstone of his Administration would be Bipartisan education reform. President Bush explained that he was looking forward to working with Congress to ensure that no child is left behind

I have received the legislature alert and find that the Last Frontier wants to leave behind children with disabilities if they waiver from the exit exam. You want to deny them proper recognition of all the hard work they have done. This move invalidates the proven fact that one test does not suit all students.

We (families with children with disabilities) believe that all students with disabilities have a right to a diploma if they can pass a test geared toward their special needs and fulfil their IEP.

I ask that you leave in the language so those children with disabilities have an opportunity to receive the diploma they have earned. It is not sad enough that the child has a life long challenge from the beginning now they are being handed the ultimate challenge, the challenge to compete with children without disabilities. IDEA says that all children have a right to a free and appropriate education. IDEA is mandated through the Federal Government shouldn't we also follow mandates in the Last Frontier?

Please consider the children of Alaska, they need your support.
Thank you,

Cecilia White

Subject: School Exit Exams

Date: Tue, 3 Apr 2001 17:02:11 -0800

From: "Hollie Swanson" <hollie@parentsinc.org>

To: <Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

CC: <Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Representatives:

I am writing in response to an alert I received today RE: Exit Exams and children who have disabilities. As the parent of a child who has severe learning disabilities, I strongly believe that children who have special learning needs have the opportunity to receive a diploma and should not be denied a diploma because of their disability. I also believe that Exit Exams for students with disabilities should be geared toward their specific disability.

Thank you.

Hollie Swanson

Subject: students with disabilities

Date: Tue, 03 Apr 2001 17:20:14 -0800

From: Daniel Lee Hasenfang <dannylee@alaska.net>

To: Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us, Senator_Lyda_Green@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us

My name is Marianne Sharp and my address is 10209 Heron Way, Juneau, AK 99559.

I understand you are meeting tomorrow about granting students with disabilities a Certificate of Attendance instead of a high school diploma.

I wanted to write to state my opinion that I believe that all students with disabilities have a right to receive a diploma if they can pass a test geared toward their special needs and fulfill their Individual Education Program goals.

Sincerely,

Marianne Sharp

Subject: concern over House changes to HSGQE bill

Date: Tue, 3 Apr 2001 20:26:52 -0800

From: "Dave and Valorie Ringle" <dvringle@ptialaska.net>

To: <Senator_Lyda_Green@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Representative Bunde:

As I read statements about representatives' opinions regarding students with disabilities and the state competency tests for graduation, I am disturbed by the failure to provide for students with disabilities who cannot pass the competency tests.

As a teacher, I feel that the tests, especially when accompanied with benchmark exams in the 6th and 3th grades, are a welcome challenge for most students. They have not changed the way I teach, but they have helped me modify and clarify objectives students must meet. For most students, these tests are a welcome motivation to remind them that social promotion is not going to result in a diploma.

There are, however, a few exceptions to every rule. I have students with disabilities who will be challenged by the test, yet I have no questions about their ability to function or their deserving of a high school diploma, assuming they continue their present level of work.

Two students come to mind. One is a boy with severe dyslexia. This student tests as the lowest reader in my class, yet he is one of the best students I have taught. He is artistically and mathematically gifted, sets high standards for himself, and compensates for his lack of reading in amazing ways. Currently he is willing to get tapes of books, listen orally, and complete all written work I require. He gives oral reports that surpass most students. His writing structure and organization is above grade level, and he understands the need for spell-checking and human proofreading to compensate for his poor spelling abilities. He at times avoids working in groups because he does not want to work with peers who do not share his high standards. This student has success written all over his school performance, yet is almost certain not to pass the high school reading exam.

Another student I have comes from a severely abusive environment. Currently we are seeing improvement of two to three grade levels in her performance as she receives a supportive educational environment and a very supportive mother. As this improvement continues, I am seeing a marked difference in her oral skills and her written skills, as diagnosed by her learning disability. While orally she can complete many skills on grade level, her written work lags significantly behind. Given the tenacity with which she has overcome a potentially tragic situation and her current skills, despite her learning disability, this person has the skills it will take to function in society--something specialists did not think possible three years ago. However hard she works to overcome the stigma of abuse, because of her learning disability I fear she will leave high school with another stigma because no accommodations are made with the competency tests for unique situations that I as an educator have seen too many times.

I urge you to reconsider your stance on the house revisions to this test and include provisions for those students who work so hard, yet because of diagnosed learning disabilities show their success in ways your test does not measure.

Dave Ringle
3786 McGinnis
Juneau, AK 99801
home: 907-790-7249
work: 907-463-1899



PARENTS

Families Assisting Families of Children With Disabilities

April 3, 2001

Dear Rep. Fred Dyson,

First of all my name is Catherine Burgess and I'm a parent of a child that has multiple disabilities and will be taking the Alternative Assessment test based on his IEP goals. I'm also a parent advocate of a non-profit agency: PARENTS, Inc. located in Anchorage, AK.

All Special Education students do deserve the opportunity to receive a diploma. Because each child that has a certain disability learn in their own unique style that is based around their IEP goals and that one test is not adequate to serve all children that have different disabilities when they learn in their own unique way.

I would encourage that you support all children that have disabilities deserve a high school diploma in which they have work so hard in getting.

Thank you for your time,

Catherine Burgess

Subject:

Date: Wed, 4 Apr 2001 08:15:43 -0800

From: "Lee Ray and Lynne" <flower24@gci.net>

To: <Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Lyda_Green@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>

I believe that all students with disabilities have a right to receive a diploma if they can pass a test geared toward their special needs and fulfill their Individual Education Program goals.

Thanks for listening to concerned parents.
Lynne Clements
Juneau, Alaska

Subject: Who is fit for a Diploma

Date: Tue, 03 Apr 2001 21:33:16 -0800

From: pkmonagle <pkmonagle@gci.net>

To: Conley R Bunde <Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us>,
Lyda N Green <Senator_Lyda_Green@legis.state.ak.us>,
Brian S Porter <Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us>,
Peggy A Wilson <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>,
Frederick J Dyson <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
Gretchen G Guess <Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us>,
Gary L Stevens <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>

It is my understanding the H.E.S.S. committee will be deciding on whether high school students should receive a valid High School diploma, if they have a mental illness.

Need we go there ladies and gentleman? Will a 'certificate of attendance' achieve anything other than create more rules and regulations against those who already suffer? Why would you even consider a bill that would belittle the efforts of these people? Are you afraid these people will steal their way into college? Are you fearful that they will be taking away skilled positions in the workplace?

I don't think our society will suffer if we give a few individuals the dignity of receiving a valid diploma if they meet all the requirements set forth by the State Department of Education! Show a little compassion and humility. May those who work hard continue to have the right of receiving a valid High School diploma!

Pat Monagle

Subject: concern over House changes to HSGQE bill

Date: Tue, 3 Apr 2001 20:26:52 -0800

From: "Dave and Valorie Ringle" <dvringle@ptialaska.net>

To: <Senator_Lyda_Green@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Representative Bunde:

As I read statements about representatives' opinions regarding students with disabilities and the state competency tests for graduation, I am disturbed by the failure to provide for students with disabilities who cannot pass the competency tests.

As a teacher, I feel that the tests, especially when accompanied with benchmark exams in the 6th and 8th grades, are a welcome challenge for most students. They have not changed the way I teach, but they have helped me modify and clarify objectives students must meet. For most students, these tests are a welcome motivation to remind them that social promotion is not going to result in a diploma.

There are, however, a few exceptions to every rule. I have students with disabilities who will be challenged by the test, yet I have no questions about their ability to function or their deserving of a high school diploma, assuming they continue their present level of work.

Two students come to mind. One is a boy with severe dyslexia. This student tests as the lowest reader in my class, yet he is one of the best students I have taught. He is artistically and mathematically gifted, sets high standards for himself, and compensates for his lack of reading in amazing ways. Currently he is willing to get tapes of books, listen orally, and complete all written work I require. He gives oral reports that surpass most students. His writing structure and organization is above grade level, and he understands the need for spell-checking and careful proofreading to compensate for his poor spelling abilities. He at times avoids working in groups because he does not want to work with people who do not share his high standards. This student has successfully written all over his school performance, yet is almost certain not to pass the high school reading exam.

Another student I have comes from a severely abusive environment. Currently we are seeing improvement of two to three grade levels in her performance as she receives a supportive educational environment and a very supportive mother. As this improvement continues, I am seeing a marked difference in her oral skills and her written skills, as diagnosed by her learning disability. While orally she can complete many skills on grade level, her written work lags significantly behind. Given the tenacity with which she has overcome a potentially tragic situation and her current skills, despite her learning disability, this person has the skills it will take to function in society--something specialists did not think possible three years ago. However hard she works to overcome the stigma of abuse, because of her learning disability I fear she will leave high school with another stigma because no accommodations are made with the competency tests for unique situations that I as an educator have seen too many times.

I urge you to reconsider your stance on the house revisions to this test and include provisions for those students who work so hard, yet because of diagnosed learning disabilities show their success in ways your test does not measure.

Dave Ringle
3786 McGinnis
Juneau, AK 99801
home: 907-790-7249
work: 907-463-1899

1/15, 04-14/11

By: Assemblymember Colver
Adopted: 03/27/01

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 01-022**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY SUPPORTING
SB 133 RELATING TO SCHOOL COMPETENCY EXAMINATIONS.

WHEREAS, SB 133 delays the exit exam until 2004, which allows for the two-year period the Department of Education has testified it will need to make sure the exams are testing the appropriate skill sets; and

WHEREAS, existing statute does not address the needs of students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP); and

WHEREAS, SB 133 allows IEP students to earn their diplomas when they pass the exam and provides flexibility in allowing modifications or accommodations; and

WHEREAS, the existing statute does not allow the Department of Education, the State Board of Education, or local school districts to address extraordinary situations by creating a waiver system; and

WHEREAS, SB 133 provides for development of a waiver process by the board defining procedure and requirements; and

WHEREAS, nothing in the current law directs the department to test for essential and foundational skills; and

WHEREAS, the extension of time ensures that students have a fair opportunity to take the courses necessary to build the skills they need.

STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Education & Early Development

State Board of Education & Early Development

file AB133
TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

Goldbelt Place
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894
(907) 465-2800
(907) 465-4156 Fax

RECEIVED

APR 05 2001

April 3, 2001

The Honorable Lyda Green
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Green:

On behalf of the State Board of Education & Early Development, I want to express our deep appreciation for your time, effort, commitment, and leadership in crafting Senate Bill 133.

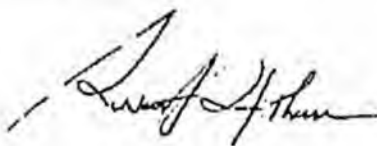
We believe the high priority you placed on SB 133 shows your insight and leadership abilities. We are grateful for the diligence and patience with which you pursued these amendments. Your achievement is a clear message to every Alaskan that you care deeply for school students, the schools they attend, and whether or not young people face a bright future.

The State Board is aware that SB 133 addresses virtually all the concerns we have had with the exit exam law, and we are deeply appreciative of the results you were able to achieve. Your bill is aimed at what we too are seeking - a disciplined, results-oriented, and accountable system of public schools where students get the help they need to meet our state's academic standards. Working together, we will get there!

Thank you for calling on the leadership and staff of the Department of Education & Early Development as you sought solutions to the challenges the exit exam law poses.

We look forward to working with you on other issues in the future.

Sincerely,



Susan Stitham
Chair



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
125 WEST EVERGREEN
PALMER, ALASKA 99645
Office of the Superintendent

Ph (907) 746-9255 fax (907) 745-0194 email: pchesbro@msb.mat-su.k12.ak.us

SB 133
file

RECEIVED

APR 04 2001

March 29, 2001

Senator Lyda Green
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol (MS 3100)
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Green:

Thank you for addressing the Alaska Association of School Administrators on Monday, March 26, 2001. I appreciated hearing your thoughts and concerns about accountability and the exit exam. It is encouraging to note that legislators, educators, and the general public are all speaking about the importance of essential learning for our students. We seem to disagree only in the implementation details. I think the committee substitute for SB 133 goes a long way in addressing important issues for students and testing. We recognize your leadership in this effort. I was glad to hear of the Senate's unanimous support.

Thank you, also, for my lunch meeting. Clearly, you have a good handle on the special situation Mat-Su School District finds itself in relation to the funding formula. I understand the difficulty of finding a way to be fair to all in such a diverse state. However, I am thankful for your advocacy for our local area and welcome any work you do to provide relief to our fiscal conundrum.

My 26 years of service in public education in Alaska convinces me that we have a strong school system. I am confident that the joint efforts of legislators, educators, and the public will strengthen our work with our children as we ensure that all have essential skills while nurturing their individuality.

Sincerely,

Patricia R. Chesbro
Superintendent

PO Box 1093
Palmer AK 99645
12.26.00/15



Alaska State Legislature

House Special Committee on Education Representative Con Bunde, Chair

State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(800) 892-4843 (907) 465-4843 (phone)
(907) 465-3871 (fax)
Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us

Brian Pate
Joe Green
Peggy Wilson
Gary Stevens
Reggie Smith
Gretchen Gies-

STATEMENT OF EXPLANATION HCS for CSSB 133 (HES) Version "T"

HCS for CSSB 133 (HES) Version "T" is a combination of the Senate-passed version of SB 133 and the Education Committee's HB 94. It maintains accountability for the State Performance Standards. It also addresses the public's concerns about opportunity to learn, children with disabilities, and students who transfer into an Alaskan high school from another state. The work that has gone into this effort, by both the Senate and the House to date, is intended to make the High School Competency Test fair to all students and legally defensible.

This bill includes the following provisions:

- delays the effective date of the High School Competency Test until February 1, 2004;
- the Legislature's commitment to improving education through the State Performance Standards and intent that the High School Competency Test is part of an evolving process;
- the student must demonstrate mastery of the State Performance Standards in reading, English and math in order to receive a diploma, or have passed a competency test in another state;
- a waiver could be granted to students who transfer to an Alaskan high school or who has rare or unusual circumstances and who has satisfied the state performance standards to the maximum extent possible;
- if a student cannot demonstrate mastery of the standards, he/she would receive a Certificate of Achievement, which would note which portions of the test the student had passed, his/her attendance record, and any other qualifications the district felt were appropriate;
- special education students may demonstrate mastery by a combination of passing the test without accommodations, with accommodations, or through a portfolio of work;
- a requirement that the Department of Education will provide the Legislature with an annual report showing indicators of the progress that schools are making toward high student achievement;
- rewards students, between 2002 and 2004, for passing the High School Competency Test; and
- asks the department to make recommendations to the Legislature regarding an appeals process and portfolios.
- asks the department to report to the Legislature on the proposed criteria and procedures for waivers.

Subject: SB 133

Date: Wed, 18 Apr 2001 11:22:22 -0800

From: "Eric & Kristi Holta" <kholta@gci.net>

To: <Representative_John_Davies@legis.state.ak.us>

Eric J. Holta

22724 Knik Vista Street

Chugiak, AK 99567

Dear Representative Davies:

I'm a lifelong Alaskan and have been teaching students with special needs within the Anchorage School District for 8 1/2 years. I'm writing to you to express my deep concern regarding the horrific changes proposed to SB 133.

I have no problem with setting high standards and goals for students or with holding us educators accountable in educating children. I welcome the idea and believe it is long overdue. I am, however, struggling with the changes made to SB 133. After reading the new version of SB 133 it appears to me that it is closer to what we currently have than it is to the original proposal. What is the difference between students passing a test based on state standards and putting together a portfolio that meet state standards? That is not an accommodation/modification, nor does it take into account the real differences in learning styles and effort put into learning. I believe this bill, as changed, does more harm than good. As a professional I'm extremely disappointed in this huge step backward. It appears to me that it falls short of meeting the intent and letter of the law concerning students with learning disabilities.

We must recognize that for many children, it is **not** a lack of effort, poor teachers, bad parenting or even over-sized classes. While these problems do exist, for many, learning is a matter of an individual's ability to master algebra or geometry, or their ability to read and write at the high school level. Some people do not, and never will, have the ability to master all the academics taught in school--they are cognitively different from "the norm." **This is neither their fault nor the fault of anyone else.** Many of these people are smart, hard working, enthusiastic, outgoing, energetic and they want to learn. We should be encouraging them and giving them options, not penalizing them for being different.

All of us know someone who fits into the category described above. Someone who, no matter what is done, will only go so far towards mastering the entire curriculum as outlined in the exit exam. These people are everywhere. Some are business owners or managers, legislators and other prominent members of our communities. What would have become of them had they been denied their diplomas? Some may have dropped out and succumbed to drugs, crime, and a life totally different than what it is today.

SB 133 as proposed by Senator Green recognizes that students learn and think with different styles and in different ways, it is a great compromise. The plan is impressive because it allows for setting high standards and at the same time recognizes that students operate on different levels of ability. It does not let kids off the hook just because they have a disability but allows for the development of individualized programs and goals. In addition it holds everyone (pupils, teachers, and parents) accountable for setting and reaching goals, no more excuses. I've

reviewed quite a few plans from different states and this is by far the best. This plan proves that you can have your cake and eat it.

If the aim is truly to better prepare our students for the future we should be giving them more options in stead of less. SB 133 as introduced by Senator Green does this and it holds everyone accountable. I am not advocating that we enable students by passing them on. I truly believe in accountability. However, we need to encourage students to stay in school and give them options when appropriate, we should not be discriminating against them because they are different. To put all students into the same category by having them pass "a" test is simply wrong. Hundreds of students will be left behind each year as a result of changes made to SB 133. Most work hard at school, are involved in their community and have bright futures. To deny them a diploma based on a test is not only cheating them but our communities as well.

The changes being proposed by Bunde and company is an atrocious miscarriage of justice. For the sake of Alaska's future I hope you will not let this happen and restore SB 133 to it's original version. If possible please include this letter as matter of record when considering SB 133.

I would be more than happy to discuss with you in-depth this extremely important issue. I look forward to hearing from you at the address above, via e-mail at eholta@yahoo.com, or via telephone at (907) 688-1008. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely Yours,

Eric J. Holta

Subject: from Louise

Date: Sat, 21 Apr 2001 08:47:49 -0700

From: Louise Parish <bells@alaska.net>

To: Representative_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Rep. Bunde,

Thanks so much for your interest and support! I thought you might enter this into written testimony for me on 133.

I am concerned that some legislators may not have a lot of experience with disabled kids. I thought I'd try to tell them some stuff that could help them in their decision-making processes. This is a very important issue.

Sometimes people have misperceptions about the term "disabled." "Disabled" does not mean "can't learn." The majority of special ed kids in Alaska fall under the category of specific learning disability. I'd guess most have reading difficulties. It's fairly common. My daughter has dyslexia. Dyslexia is a language-based specific learning disability. Kids with specific learning disabilities like dyslexia CAN learn to read.

Dyslexics are probably the low end of a wide spectrum of kids that have difficulty processing and blending sounds and symbols (reading.) Are these dyslexic kids permanently disabled? Yes. They'll probably always process a little differently and struggle more than others. Does that mean they can't learn to read? NO. Dyslexics and struggling readers learn how when they take their kids to private clinics all the time. Can these programs be implemented in the schools at the K-2 level to provide a road map for kids who don't "pick up" on reading rules innately? Yes. This is what should be occurring for ALL potential struggling readers, not just kids who have qualified for eligibility as a child with a specific learning disability.

SLD sped kids are of at least average intelligence. To qualify as a child with a specific learning disability, a child must be determined to be of at least average intelligence, and display a significant discrepancy between their ability and achievement. An easy way to describe it is to think of a kid with a normal or above normal IQ (ability) and a surprisingly lousy reading ability (achievement). ... (This eligibility criteria issue is a whole other bag of beans and one I won't touch right now....)

How do the kids get this discrepancy? Take your struggling first grader and wait a couple of years. Seriously. This is my perception. The kid usually has to wait until about third grade to accrue a discrepancy great enough to qualify them for sped. Up until third grade, they spend time getting comparatively worse. They're pretty much staying the same while the other kids are "getting it." Special ed is supposed to help kids "close the gap" between ability and achievement. I believe it often widens. It would be best if we didn't wait for the gap to open beyond a peek.

Kids like mine have difficulty reading because they process information differently than other kids. It's not that their hearing is bad, or that their eyesight is bad. They have a processing glitch that makes it hard for them to associate sounds to symbols. Dyslexics don't automatically perceive (not hear, but perceive, it's a processing thing) that words rhyme. They don't automatically perceive the beat of a syllable chunk. They don't "get it" like other kids do. The code of language that comes easily to others doesn't come to them without explicit instruction. It's frustrating for them because they are smart, but feel dumb.

Here are a few examples. Think of the word CAT. You and I automatically perceive that there are three sounds in it. Kuh-A-Tuh. A dyslexic perceives one sound. CAT. They can't pull sounds and words apart into their component parts. This immediately limits their ability to manipulate and understand words. They usually instead identify the first consonant and guess by word configuration memorization (length and shape of letters.) This doesn't work for very long. Anyway....

Think of the TH sound. You and I look at the written letters TH and automatically know we stick our tongues between our teeth and blow to get either a vibratory th as in the word "these" or a light th as in the word "thick." Dyslexics and other struggling readers have to be taught to associate the written letters with these two sounds and to try both ways when they see TH together. They remember because they think of what their body was doing when they saw the letters together. It's called "multi-sensory." It's really not that hard. It can really be implemented into our programs fairly easily.

Here's another. Think of the word "water". Most kids at the end of kindergarten could probably tell you it had two syllables and pound it out for you. Not dyslexic kids. They might tap it out with one tap. All they perceived was one big sound that said water. Can they be taught to understand and perceive what other kids do? Absolutely. Dyslexic and struggling readers can be taught to perceive the sound symbol relationship if it's presented in a way they can relate to. That "way," however, is usually NOT the way classroom teachers are teaching.

Here's a couple of others you might relate to. Dyslexics and struggling readers need to be taught to think of rules and expectancies as a reading strategy. The expectancies become embedded with practice. Struggling and dyslexic readers should be explicitly shown the initial "process." For instance, they are taught the "X" expectancy. If an X is at the beginning of a word, it usually sounds like zz. If it's in the middle, it usually sounds like gz. If it's at the end of a word, it usually sounds like a ks. We non-dyslexics don't even think about this. We just know it. Dyslexics have to be shown and taught it. Again, not that hard.

If the teachers don't know how to do it, can they be taught how? Absolutely. Do I have the phone numbers to trainers? Yep. Is this bogus? Nope, research-based methods of reading instruction are making their way into classrooms across the nation because they have been PROVEN to be successful.

Do we have to wait for kids to display a significant discrepancy between ability and achievement in third grade or so before we can start using these methods of instruction?

No. We can identify 95% of potential struggling readers with a number of professional and simple end-of-kindergarten tests. I have numbers for those too and many are free. Texas has ten approved end of K screening tools. Many are called phonemic awareness tests (LAC, Yopp-Singer, many more)...

Can all struggling kids benefit from a system of K-2 screening, diversion and intervention using proven methods of reading instruction. YES. We can set up systems of diversion for kids who are going to struggle. Other states already do. At the end of kindergarten we give the screen. Those who fail get diverted to small group instruction using proven methods of instruction during first grade. Maybe 30 minutes a day. Some kids "get it" and exit. Some kids need more help. Ditto in second grade. By third grade, if you have done it systematically and correctly and not just in a hodgepodge of what you could pull together and fit in, you should have tons less kids going into special ed. Even

from Louise

the ones that do go in will be tons better than they would have been without intervention. You should be able to get 95 percent of all kids to basic competency by graduation.

I just wanted you to understand that LD kids CAN learn if schools decide to make reform a priority. I don't think schools will get this K-2 thing going without an impetus. They haven't so far. Maybe they would if there was a new consequence, such as "NO IEP DIPLOMAS."

Thanks much.

Louise

SB

133

SFIN

FILE

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

REPORTED OUT
MAR 26 2001
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

DATE: 3/20/01

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED IN TO OFFICE:

27 March 2001

Finance Committee considered

SENATE BILL NO. 133

PUBLIC SCHOOL EXIT EXAM

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

and recommends:

- be replaced with _____ CS _____ (_____)
- adopt previous _____ CS SB 133 (HES)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:
 same title
 new title
House Bill:
 same title
 technical title
 new: SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#
Dept. of Education & Early Develop.	03/16/01	65.9		1

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
<i>Gary White</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>Kevin D. Hemen</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>[Signature]</i>				
<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
<i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
COCHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
COCHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

MAR 26 2001

SENATE FINANCE
COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
Bill Version: CSSB 133(HES)
(S) Publish Date: 3/20/01

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development
Title: An Act relating to a two-year transition for imple- BRU: Teaching & Learning Support
mentation of the public high school competency examination Component: Quality Schools
Sponsor: Senate HESS
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	48.0					
Contractual	17.9					
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	65.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	65.9					
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	65.9	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)

The legislation amends AS 14.03.075 to allow a governing body to grant a waiver of the competency exam requirement based on criteria established by the State Board of Education & Early Development (SBOEED) to develop the waiver, the SBOEED will engage the Alaskan public through a series of face-to-face regional meetings and teleconferences. Meetings and teleconferences will be advertised statewide. During FY03, the SBOEED will draft the waiver parameters to fulfill the reporting requirements for the January 2003 report to the legislature. The SBOEED will then promulgate regulations delineating the waiver process requirements.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson, Deputy Director Phone 465-8727
Division: Teaching & Learning Support Date/Time 3/16/01 12:00 AM
Approved by: Bruce Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education Date 03/16/2001
Agency: Department of Education & Early Development

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
3 / 26 2001 COMMITTEE ACTION

Bill Number	SB 133		
Amendment	1		
Motion:	Hoffman		
<u>Motion by</u>			
<u>Objection by</u>			
<u>Removed</u>			
<u>Second Objection by</u>			
<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>Vote</u>	<u>N</u>
Senator Austerman			
Senator Green			✓
Senator Hoffman	✓		✓
Senator Leman			✓
Senator Olson	✓		
Senator Ward			
Senator Wilken			✓
Co-Chair Donley			✓
Co-Chair Kelly			✓
<u>Tally</u>			
Yea			
Nay			
Absent			
MOTION FAILED 5-2			

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE SENATOR LYDA GREEN, CHAIR

SPONSOR STATEMENT CS SENATE BILL 133(HES)

CSSB 133 (HES) focuses on three main goals:

1. Continue giving the exam, thus requiring responsibility and accountability;
2. Ensure the exams test knowledge of essential skills and that students taking the exam as seniors have been taught the appropriate material; and
3. Address provisions for special education/disabled students and extraordinary situations.

Although the existing exit exam law has effected positive change to Alaska's education efforts, several problems with the exam have been identified over the last several years. CSSB 133(HES) addresses these problems by delaying the implementation of denying diplomas for failing the exam until 2004, by creating a carefully administered waiver program for extraordinary situations and by adding language that would allow students participating in an "individual education plan" the ability to earn a diploma.

Currently, some students are being tested on skill sets they are not required to know by state statute and/or by local school districts, on information they have never been taught, and they will be denied a diploma if they fail the exam. Additionally, content review committees, especially in mathematics, did not develop tests for those essential skills we expect students to have when they graduate. CSSB 133 (HES) provides the department with two additional years to resolve this serious matter. During this two year period, CSSB 133(HES) requires that students take the exam and that areas of the exam they successfully pass be shown on their diplomas and transcripts.

Also, current law makes no provision for students with an IEP. Consequently, students with an IEP would be denied the opportunity to earn a diploma. CSSB 133(HES) addresses this inequity by ensuring students with an IEP have the same opportunities as students without special education needs.

Additionally, the current law provides no flexibility for the department to consider extraordinary situations such as illness or military transfer students. CSSB 133(HES) addresses this issue by creating a waiver system. The legislation requires the department and the board of education to develop the criteria and procedures for such a waiver and then return to the legislature to report on their proposed regulations by January 31, 2003.

In short, though CS for Senate Bill 133 (HES) is relatively short and simple, it is also the only legislation introduced this year that comprehensively addresses the problems expressed to the Senate HESS Committee. CSSB 133(FIN) is reasonable legislation designed to enhance current competency exam laws so that Alaska's children can fully benefit from their educational efforts.

SENATOR LOREN LEMAN, VICE-CHAIR
SENATOR JERRY WARD, SENATOR GARY WILKEN, SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS

SB 133: PUBLIC SCHOOL EXIT EXAM

BY SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Prepared by Aurora Hauke, Senate HESS Committee Aide

Sec.	Statute	Existing	Changes
1	Uncodified law	None.	New section INTENT added. The intent of this Act is to encourage schools and districts to develop endorsements, implement reasonable testing procedures, and that the exam should focus on skills one is expected to know in order to function in society.
2	AS 14.03.075 added by sec. 1 ch. 58, SLA 1997 Education, Libraries, and Museums Public Schools Generally General Provisions Secondary student [PUPIL] competency examination [TESTING]	A pupil cannot be issued a high school diploma unless that student passes a competency examination. A pupil who fails the exam shall receive a certificate of attendance and may be reexamined not more often than once every three months and must pass the test within three years of ceasing to attend school.	In addition to passing the test, the student can receive a waiver from the governing body. Students who fail the test will not get a certificate of attendance. The procedures for reexamination are to be established by the department.
3	AS 14.03.075 added by sec. 1 ch. 58, SLA 1997	None.	New subsections added. A student will receive an endorsement on their diploma for each part of the exam passed. A student with a disability who fails the exam is eligible for a diploma if they complete their IEP or 504 plan and meet other graduation requirements. The department will establish standards for pre-examination study materials, administration procedures, and the awarding of waivers and procedures for recording exam results on transcripts.
4	AS 14.03.120(d) Education, Libraries, and Museums Public Schools Generally Education planning	Each public school must provide a report of their performance annually. The report must include various types of information which are intended to show the performance of the school.	The report must also include the number of students who received a diploma under a waiver.

Sec.	Statute	Existing	Changes
5	AS 14.07.165 Education, Libraries, and Museums Administration of Public Schools State Board of Education Duties	The board must adopt statewide goals, require local goals and adopt various regulations for grants, charter schools, boarding schools, etc.	The board must also adopt regulations implementing the exams, including criteria and procedure for waivers which includes provisions that the student satisfy the performance standards to the maximum extent possible.
6	Section 3, ch. 58, SLA 1997 Education, Libraries, and Museums Public Schools Generally General Provisions Secondary pupil competency testing	This Act takes effect January 1, 2002.	This Act takes effect February 1, 2004.
7	Uncodified law	None.	New section APPLICABILITY added. The standards and requirements required by AS 14.03.075 as amended by this Act apply to students who graduate on or after February 1, 2004.
8	Uncodified law	None.	New section TRANSITION: ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION added. Between February 1, 2002 and January 31, 2004, each student is required to take a competency examination or alternative assessment and meet academic requirements established by the state and local school board in order to receive a diploma. The department will determine the form and contents of the exam. A student will receive an endorsement on their diploma for each section of the exam passed.
9	Uncodified law	None.	New section TRANSITION: REGULATIONS added. The department may immediately proceed to adopt regulations necessary to implement the changes made by this Act. The regulations will take effect when the changes take effect.
10	Uncodified law	None.	New section REPORT added. The department shall deliver a report to the Legislature that describes proposed criteria and procedures for waivers by January 31, 2003.
11	Effective date		Sections 2-5 of this Act take effect February 1, 2004.
12	Effective date		Sections 6 and 9 of this Act take effect immediately.
13	Effective date		The rest of this Act takes effect February 1, 2002.