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HOUSE HESS

Overview of University of Alaska Activities Pertaining to Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention in Alaska

The University of Alaska continues to focus its efforts on programs that benefit public education throughout Alaska, with efforts spanning over all MAUs. UA welcomes the opportunity to report to the Legislature on the quality, placement, and employment of teachers and administrators from these programs as well as other efforts.

Academic Programs Offered:

The UAA College of Education (UAA COE) offers academic programs in several areas. The Department of Educational Leadership within UAA COE offers graduate degrees in Educational Administration and Adult Education. The Department of Counseling and Special Education offers a variety of programs for individuals interested in working as special educators, speech pathologists, and counselors. Lastly, the Department of Teaching and Learning offers a variety of programs for individuals interested in working as early childhood, elementary, or secondary educators.

The UAF School of Education (UAF SOE) offers a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education for undergraduate students, a one year post-baccalaureate program for people who already have a degree, and two Elementary Education minors. The Secondary Post-Baccalaureate Licensure Program serves individuals who currently hold degrees and are interested in pursuing a career in teaching at the middle school and high school level. The UAF SOE Graduate department also offers Master of Education degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, Cross-Cultural Education, Counseling, and Reading. UAF SOE also serves as the administrative home for the Bachelor of Arts and Sciences degree and offers non-degree professional development programs to teachers who wish to add endorsements. The UAF SOE is nationally accredited, and all programs are approved by their respective professional associations.

The UAS School of Education (UAS SOE) offers a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and an AAS in Early Childhood Education for undergraduate students. For students who already have a bachelor's degree and want to become a teacher, a Master of Arts in Teaching is offered with focus areas available in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and Secondary Education. The School of Education also provides support for experienced teachers through a Master of Education degree with emphasis areas available in Special Education, Educational Technology, Early Childhood Education, and Reading Specialist, as well as graduate certificates in a variety of areas, including Mathematics Education. The School of Education is also home to the PITAAS (Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska Schools) program.

Support Activities: Programs range from teacher and administrator recruitment and preparation to professional development training, in-service support programs, and curriculum development. Many of these efforts are in collaboration with leading national research centers, the state Department of Education and Early Development (EED), scientists, and school districts throughout Alaska. A detailed list of UA activities by area can be found starting on page 2.

Reports and Information: The University has published a number of reports pertaining to teacher training, recruitment, and retention, including accreditation reports, grant performance reports,

teacher quality reports, the Alaska teacher supply and demand report, missions and measures reporting, Department of Labor employment follow-ups, and graduation reports. A selected list of these reports can be found in the appendix.

The Challenges:

The recruitment and retention of highly qualified educators is an important and complex policy issue for all of Alaska. Federal and State educational policies compel individual school districts, the state Department of Education and Early Development, and postsecondary institutions to develop programs that are in compliance with these regulations.

Suggestions:

Through expanding and strengthening existing partnerships with other state agencies, as well as with the fifty-three individual school districts in Alaska, even greater progress can be achieved. One possible approach is to request a shared reporting session including UA, EED, ACPE, school districts, and DOLWD to foster a dialogue between agencies to address the full range of issues that influence recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators throughout Alaska. This approach may serve to improve communication, collaboration, and help to focus state educational policy.

UA Activity Detail

Future Teachers of Alaska

A key facet in UA's efforts to recruit future teachers to the profession is the Future Teachers of Alaska program. In collaboration with rural and urban school districts, this program targets Alaska's Indigenous students, engaging and encouraging them at an early age with college readiness activities to prepare them for careers in education. Other teacher preparation and support programs at UA include the Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska's Schools (PITAAS) program housed at the Juneau campus of UAS, and the Alaska Native Educators Student Association (ANESA) at UAF.

K-12 Outreach

The K-12 Outreach Program housed at UA Statewide works directly with school districts on recruitment and retention issues. The Alaska Teacher Placement program (ATP) works to fill the gap between teacher supply and demand by providing recruiting assistance to school districts, maintaining the ATP Job Bank online at alaskateacher.org, and hosting job fairs both in Alaska and the Lower 48. In collaboration with EED, ATP also works to recruit special education teachers.

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project, in partnership with EED, supports beginning teachers throughout Alaska. Working with the New Teacher Center, ASMP is a grassroots effort that serves the needs of first and second year teachers onsite by providing formative assessment and feedback through teacher observation and support.

The UA Alaska Educational Innovations Network (AEIN), located at UAA, was established to build stronger teaching and learning communities in nine partner school districts. This program offers professional development and training to teacher leaders and support to school districts.

The K-12 outreach effort at UA also includes activities for students such as sports camps, the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI), and Upward Bound, which offer the opportunity to complete college preparatory courses. The International Polar Year (IPY), for example, provided every school in Alaska with a set of posters and an educational resource guide with information about IPY. In addition, there is an art contest for students sponsored by IPY Education Outreach.

Research and Curriculum Development

Research grants often encourage a K-12 curriculum component. As a result, researchers and scientists alike are working to develop curriculum and resources for teachers right here in Alaska. Some examples include: Aurora Alive, an interactive DVD for students and teachers; Geographic Information for Alaska (GINA), a network and resource for teachers to use in the classroom; Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE), a worldwide, hands-on, primary and secondary school-based science and education program; Science Teacher Education Program (STEP), a professional development program designed to increase Alaska teachers' science content knowledge in order to meet Alaska State Science Standards; the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN), which provides resources for compiling and exchanging information related to Alaska Native knowledge systems and traditional ways of knowing; and Math in a Cultural Context (MCC), a long-term, collaborative project aimed at developing supplemental math curricula based on the traditional wisdom and practices of the Yup'ik Eskimo people.

APPENDIX

Inventory of Reports Related to Teacher Training, Recruitment and Retention in Alaska

- Alaska Teacher Supply and Demand Report, 2005 Update
- Teacher Supply and Demand in Alaska—A 2005 Snapshot
- Finding and Keeping Teachers in Alaska - 2006 Supply and Demand Fact Sheet from Alaska Teacher Placement
- Turnover Among Alaska's Teachers: How many leave their jobs?
- Graduates of Alaska's Teacher Preparation Programs – Where Are They Now?
- Alaska Statewide Teacher Mentor Project Research Highlights, 2006-2007
- Alaska Statewide Teacher Mentor Project Executive Summary

- UAA College of Education - Program Overview
- UAA College of Education - Detailed Program Profile
- UAA College of Education - NCATE Institutional Report

- UAF School of Education - Strategic Enrollment Management Plan
- UAF School of Education - NCATE Institutional Report
- UAF School of Education - NCATE Board of Examiners Report

- UAS School of Education - Fact Sheet
- UAS School of Education - Center for Teacher Education Overview
- UAS School of Education - NCATE Board of Examiners Report

- Residency and Employment Followup on UA Teacher Education Graduates, 1989 - 2006

- University of Alaska End Results Performance Reporting on High Demand Job Area Program Graduates (Teacher Education)

Note: Each of the above reports is updated on a cyclical basis, ranging from semi-annual updates to an update cycle of several years.

Representative Mike Hawker

Alaska State Legislature



House Bill 274 Sponsor Statement

Short Title: University Report: Teacher Training/Retention

HB 274 is part of the recommendations adopted by the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force. The bill requires the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska system to prepare an annual report to the legislature describing its efforts to attract, train and retain qualified public school teachers.

The number of teacher vacancies far outpaces the number of Alaskans trained to be public school teachers. According to a recent fact sheet produced by the University, "the State of Alaska experiences about 1,100 teaching vacancies each year and in-state teacher training programs produce only about 220 graduates per year." Our statewide university and other training institutions must continue to whittle away at this unfortunate gap.

The Alaska State Legislature and the University of Alaska need to work together to ensure our 53 school districts have the best teachers possible, preferably Alaska trained teachers. An annual report offered by the University will be the beginning of a meaningful dialogue between these two institutions.

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Legislative Budget
& Audit Committee

House District 37:

Eagle River
Anchorage
Rainbow
Indian
Bud
Creswood
Portage
Whittier
Seward
Hope

HB 274

Sectional Analysis

Prepared by Representative Mike Hawker's Office

Section 1: Requires the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska to prepare an annual report that describes the university's efforts to attract, train and retain qualified public school teachers. Details information that must be included in the report.

Sections 2 and 3: Correct statutory references required by section 1 of this bill.

HB

276



Alaska State Legislature
Representative Andrea Doll
House District 4

Sponsor Statement
HB 276 Commission on Aging Sunset

House Bill 276 extends the sunset date of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) until June 30, 2016, in accordance with the recommendations of the Legislative Auditor. The conclusion of the audit report, released on July 3, 2007, is as follows:

"In our opinion, the Alaska Commission on Aging is helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and productive lives. We recommend the legislature adopt legislation extending ACoA's termination date to June 30, 2016."

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) consists of eleven member including three commissioners, the chair of the Pioneers' Homes Advisory Board and seven public members appointed by the governor. Six of seven public members must be older Alaskans, and all serve four year terms. The commission is staffed by an executive director with a staff of three. ACoA advocates for state policy, public and private partnerships, and citizen involvement to better enable Alaskans to age successfully in our homes, in our communities or as near as possible to our communities and families. The commission works to ensure that seniors live with dignity and respect and have an opportunity to receive services to promote and enhance their physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health.

The Commission was established under AS 44.21.200 in 1982 and is now housed in the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The ACoA collaborates with the Department, provider agencies and the public to develop the Alaska's State Plan for Services as well as funding formulas to allocate pass-thru grant funds received from the federal government. The ACoA also collaborates with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for project and program development, and makes funding recommendations as required by Alaska Statutes.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

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July 3, 2007

Members of the Legislative Budget
and Audit Committee:

In accordance with the provisions of Title 24 and Title 44 of the Alaska Statutes (sunset legislation), we have reviewed the activities of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA). The attached report is submitted for your review.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING SUNSET REVIEW

July 3, 2007

Audit Control Number

06-20054-07

This sunset review was conducted as required by AS 44.66.050 and under the authority of AS 24.20.271(1). Alaska Statute 44.66.050(c) lists criteria to be used to assess the demonstrated public need for a given board, commission, agency, or program, subject to the sunset review process. Currently, under AS 44.66.010(a)(4) the commission terminates on June 30, 2008. If the legislature takes no action to extend this date, the commission would be allowed one year in which to conclude its administrative operations.

In our opinion, ACoA is helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and productive lives. We recommend the legislature adopt legislation extending ACoA's termination date to June 30, 2016.

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government audit standards. Fieldwork procedures utilized in the course of developing the findings and discussion presented in this report are discussed in Objectives, Scope, and Methodology.

Pat Davidson, CPA
Legislative Auditor

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OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In accordance with Titles 24 and 44 of the Alaska Statutes, we have reviewed the activities of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA or commission) to determine if there is a demonstrated public need for its continued existence and if it has been operating in an efficient and effective manner.

As required by AS 44.66.050(a), the legislative committee shall consider this report as part of the oversight process in determining if ACoA should be reestablished. State law currently specifies ACoA will terminate on June 30, 2008. If no action is taken by the legislature, the commission will have one year from that date to conclude its administrative operations.

Objectives

The two central, interrelated objectives of our report are:

1. To determine if the termination date of the commission should be extended.
2. To determine if the commission is operating in the public interest.

The assessment of the operations and performance of the commission was based on criteria set out in AS 44.66.050(c). Criteria set out in this statute relate to the determination of a demonstrated public need for the commission.

Scope and Methodology

Our audit reviewed the operation and activities of ACoA for the period of July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2007.

During the course of our examination, we reviewed and evaluated the applicable statutes and regulations, minutes of commission meetings, state plans, and other documentation and files related to the commission's operations and mission.

We attended the May 22-24, 2007 ACoA quarterly meeting held in Fairbanks, Alaska and interviewed the commissioners and their staff. We spoke with personnel at agencies and organizations affiliated with ACoA; including the State's Long-Term Care Ombudsman, representatives of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Senior Housing Office, and representatives of the American Association of Retired Persons' Capital City Task Force and AgeNet. Further, we conducted a survey of senior services providers, in order to solicit their perspective on how effectively they believe the commission is operating.

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ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA or commission) is established in the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) under the Office of the Commissioner.

The commission is made up of 11 members and employs a staff of four. Seven members are appointed by the governor based on their knowledge and demonstrated interest in the concerns of older Alaskans. Alaska Statute 47.45.200 requires the seven appointments be made to ensure representation of low-income persons and minorities, and representation from rural and urban areas of the state, and to secure statewide geographical representation on the commission. These members serve overlapping four-year terms at the pleasure of the governor and all seven are voting members. Two members are the commissioners or their designees from DHSS and the Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development (DCCED). An additional member must be a senior services provider and another has to be a Pioneers' Home Advisory Board member.

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

(As of June 30, 2007)

Commissioners:

Frank Appel, Chair
Sharon Howerton-Clark, Vice Chair
Karleen Jackson, DHSS Commissioner
Emil Notti, DCCED Commissioner
Lillian Kasnick
Betty Keegan
Banarsi Lal
Iver Malutin
Paula Rae Pawlowski
Patricia Branson, Senior Services Provider
Edward W. Zastrow, Chair Pioneers' Home
Advisory Board

Commission standing committees include: executive, planning, legislative advocacy, gerontology education and training, and by-laws.

Together, provisions of AS 47.45 and the Older Americans Act (OAA) establish the commission's authority, purpose, and scope of work. The primary functions of the commission include:

1. Approve a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies the concerns and needs of older Alaskans and, with reference to the approved plan, prepare and submit to the governor and legislature an annual analysis and evaluation of the services provided to older Alaskans;
2. Make recommendations directly to the governor and the legislature with respect to legislation, regulations, and appropriations for programs or services that benefit older Alaskans;
3. Encourage the development of municipal commissions serving older Alaskans and community-oriented programs and services for the benefit of older Alaskans;

4. Employ an executive director who serves at the pleasure of the commission. Currently, the executive director oversees a staff of three in Juneau;
5. Help older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and productive lives;
6. Request and receive reports and audits from state agencies and local institutions concerned with the conditions and needs of older Alaskans;
7. Give assistance, upon request, to the senior housing office in the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation in administration of the senior housing loan program under AS 18.56.710 - 18.56.799 and in the performance of the office's other duties under AS 18.56.700; and,
8. Provide recommendations concerning the integrated comprehensive mental health program for persons with dementia-related illnesses to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, for its review and consideration. Also provide recommendations regarding the use of monies in the mental health trust settlement income account in a manner consistent with regulations adopted under AS 47.30.031.

Although ACoA has been given extensive authority to address almost all the concerns of older Alaskans, AS 44.45.240(c) stipulates the commission may not investigate, review, or undertake any responsibility for the longevity bonus program under AS 47.45 or the Alaska Pioneers' Homes under AS 47.55.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Federal Administration on Aging distributes funds to states. For a state to receive these funds, a state agency must be designated as the state unit on aging. In Alaska, this state unit is the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS).¹ State unit responsibilities (as defined by the Federal Older Americans Act) are carried out jointly by Division of Seniors and Disabilities Services (DSDS) and the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA). DSDS is responsible for administering and distributing federal funds while ACoA is responsible for planning and advocating for Alaska's seniors.

ACoA and the State Plan Advisory Committee² work together to establish a State Plan for Senior Services which includes a funding framework for distribution of grants. The Older American Act (OAA) requires this framework be representative of the population targeted by OAA - frail, low-income, minority, and rural seniors.

A state may be divided into a number of planning and services areas or, as in the case of Alaska, be a single planning and service area (PSA). Single PSA states have the role and responsibilities of an area agency on aging. Section 305 of OAA states:

The State agency shall continue to perform the functions of an area agency on aging for any area of the State not included in a planning and service area for which an area agency on aging has been designated.

Section 306(a)(D) of OAA states, area agencies must:

... establish an advisory council consisting of older individuals (including minority individuals and older individuals residing in rural areas) who are participants or who are eligible to participate in programs assisted under this Act, family caregivers of such individuals, representatives of older individuals, service providers, representatives of the business community, local elected officials, providers of veterans health care (if appropriate), and the general public, to advise continuously the area agency on aging on all matters relating to the development of the area plan, the administration of the plan and operations conducted under the plan.

In Alaska, ACoA serves as this advisory council.

¹ Information from the FY 08-11 State Plan for Senior Services and Code of Federal Regulations 42.35 Sec. 3025.

² The State Plan Advisory Committee is made up of members from ACoA's Planning Committee, current and former ACoA staff, DSDS staff, DHSS Commissioner's Office staff, the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training Program, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman office, Southeast Senior Services, the senior housing program at Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, the Rasmuson Foundation, and Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.

In 2003, per an executive order, ACoA was moved to DHSS from the Department of Administration. DHSS became the state unit on aging and former ACoA granting responsibilities were delegated to DSDS. The other responsibilities of the state unit on aging—planning, educating, and advocating for Alaska's seniors—remained with ACoA.

REPORT CONCLUSIONS

Under AS 44.66.010(a)(4), the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA or commission) will terminate on June 30, 2008. If the legislature does not take action to extend the termination date, the commission will have one year to conclude its affairs. In developing our conclusion on whether the termination date of ACoA should be extended, we evaluated the commission's operations using the 11 factors set out in AS 44.66.050(c). Under the State's "sunset" law, these 11 factors are to be considered when determining if a commission has demonstrated a public need for its continued operation.

Section 306(a)(D) of the Older American's Act (OAA) requires the establishment of an advisory council consisting of older individuals who are participants or who are eligible to participate in programs assisted under this Act. Federal funding, made available to the State under OAA, is contingent on satisfying this requirement. ACoA satisfies this federal requirement.

After departmental reorganization in 2003 and with the granting function now part of the Division of Seniors and Disabilities Services, ACoA worked to define their new role. Since the move from the Department of Administration to the Department of Health and Social Services, ACoA has been hampered by staffing problems and, consequentially, did not prepare the required annual reports for state fiscal years 2003, 2004, or 2005. Additionally, the State Plan for Senior Services for FY 04-06 was extended.

Currently, ACoA has emerged from the reorganization as a respected planner, educator, and advocator for Alaska's seniors. During FY 07, ACoA set and accomplished operational goals; this included preparation of the annual report for 2006. After consideration of the 11 factors and review of ACoA's activities, we conclude a public need exists for the continuation of ACoA. We recommend that the legislature extend ACoA's termination date to June 30, 2016.

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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The legislature should consider amending state law to reflect the Alaska Commission on Aging's (ACoA or commission) current mission.

The grant administration responsibilities for ACoA, as defined in state law,³ are no longer performed by the commission; rather, these duties are now being done by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS).

Executive Order 108 established DSDS within DHSS on July 1, 2003. This new division assumed all policy, program, and administrative responsibilities for grant administration previously performed by ACoA in the Department of Administration (DOA). Further, this executive order reestablished ACoA within DHSS. ACoA retained all the policy, program, and administrative responsibilities it had previously performed within DOA, with the exception of those grant administration functions assigned to DSDS. However, Alaska statutes were not updated to accurately reflect these changes.

The following current Alaska Statutes are not being performed by ACoA:

1. AS 47.45.240(a) *The commission shall: (7) with the approval of the commissioner of health and social services, set policy for the administration of federal programs subject to state control as provided under 42 U.S.C. 3001-30058ee (Older Americans Act, as amended); (8) with the approval of the commissioner of health and social services, set policy for the administration of federal programs as provided under AS 47.65.*
2. Sec. 47.65.010. *Older Alaskans service programs. An amount to carry out the provisions of AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050 may be appropriated annually by the legislature. The amount appropriated shall be fully distributed by the Alaska Commission on Aging to sponsors of older Alaskans service programs in accordance with the provisions of AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050.*
3. Sec. 47.45.230. *Executive director.... (2) administer, with the approval of the commissioner of health and social services, federal programs subject to state control as provided under 42 U.S.C. 3001 - 3058ee (Older Americans Act), as amended; and (3) administer, with the approval of the commissioner of health and social services, state programs as provided under AS 47.65.*

As a result, ACoA has not accomplished some of its statutory duties and responsibilities as currently written. The ACoA chairman and DHSS commissioner should pursue changes to Alaska statutes so that they are reflective of ACoA's current role.

³ AS 47.45.24(a)(7-8), AS 47.65.010-050, and AS 47.45.230

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ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC NEED

The following analyses of board activities relate to the public need factors defined in AS 44.66.050(c). These analyses are not intended to be comprehensive, but address those areas we were able to cover within the scope of our review.

Determine the extent to which the board, commission, or program has operated in the public interest.

Collaborates with other agencies and community-based programs

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA or commission) works in collaboration with state departments and coordinates many of their activities with other agencies. The recently-created State Plan for Senior Services for FY 08-11 was produced by an interagency advisory committee. This committee, led by ACoA, included 11 other groups and agencies. In addition to the plan being a requirement for the State to receive federal funding, the plan serves as a guide for senior services providers, grant writers, other state agencies, and individuals. The plan involves various strategies for improved senior care and ACoA will work to ensure that these strategies are adopted. The advisory committee will continue to meet periodically to monitor and ensure implementation of the plan.

ACoA meets four times per year in various locations across the State. Various agencies and senior services providers from the community in which the meeting is held are invited to make presentations. In recent years, ACoA has held one of their quarterly meetings in a rural location. These rural meetings provide a means for the commission to see, first hand, the needs and concerns of seniors in the State's rural or bush areas.

ACoA and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMTHA) have built a good working relationship. AMTHA funds one of ACoA's "planner" positions. This position is responsible for the planning and coordination of recommendations to AMTHA regarding funding senior services for persons with dementia-related illnesses. Although this position is currently vacant, AMTHA reports they have been satisfied with ACoA's recommendations. In the past two years, AMTHA has funded two-thirds of the proposals received from ACoA. Examples of these AMTHA-funded proposals include Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disabilities (ADRD) caregiver education/training and increased ADRD support services.

Although the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) was transferred from the direct

oversight of the commission in 2001, ACoA continues to collaborate with this office.⁴ The two entities work together on senior issues and have established a rapport. LTCO consistently attends ACoA's quarterly meetings and provides quarterly status reports of the offices' activities, as well as information of upcoming concerns and issues for Alaska's seniors. In addition to attending ACoA meetings, LTCO travels with the commission on their site-visits.

Additionally, ACoA collaborates with the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skill Training (MASST) program. In 2005, the MASST program was moved from the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS), to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The MASST program provides training and paid part-time work experience to low-income persons age 55 and older. The program receives referrals and information about senior needs from ACoA and, in turn, collaborates with ACoA on advocacy issues. The program manager of MASST was also part of the State Plan for Senior Services FY 08-11 advisory committee.

More than 90 percent of survey respondents⁵ reported ACoA encouraged public participation in developing regulations and other commission decisions. Over 80 percent of respondents agreed ACoA consults and cooperates with their community organization on programs for older Alaskans.

Keeps older Alaskans informed on important issues

ACoA holds a biweekly, legislative teleconference each year while the state legislature is in session. Seventeen sites across the State host these teleconferences. Legislative teleconference dates, hosts, and ACoA's "*Legislative Watch List*" are available to the public on ACoA's website. Our senior services provider survey concluded 79 percent of respondents agreed that ACoA has been effective in educating senior services providers and Alaska's seniors on the legislative developments affecting older Alaskans.

ACoA and staff often work to provide education and information on issues important to Alaska seniors. Governor Palin proclaimed May 2007 as "Older Americans Month" and ACoA kicked off a "Healthy Bodies...Healthy Brains" campaign. This campaign was a joint effort between ACoA, Division of Public Health, and AMTHA.

Commission staff produces a bimonthly newsletter, *Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger*. This is ACoA's most consistent medium of public information exchange and is mailed to over 800 addresses across the State.

⁴ The role of LTCO is that of a specially trained and certified state government employee who has been given authority by federal and Alaska statutes to identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of Alaskans, 60 years of age or older. The mission of LTCO is to promote and protect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of Alaskan seniors, age 60 and over. Their core services include complaint investigations, advocacy, and education.

⁵ A survey was sent to 92 senior services providers across Alaska; 45 (49%) of these providers responded to our survey. Complete survey results are located in Appendix A.

Determine the extent to which the board, commission, or agency has recommended statutory changes that are generally of benefit to the public interest.

The commission has advocated, supported, and/or recommended several changes to statutes or bills related to the needs of older Alaskans. Examples of successful legislation supported by resolution and/or formal support of ACoA included the following:

- Chapter 03, SLA 04 – Creating the SeniorCare program to provide a monthly cash benefit or alternative prescription drug benefit to low-income seniors.
- Chapter 89, SLA 05 – Extended the SeniorCare program for an additional two years, through June 30, 2007.
- Chapter 92, SLA 05 – Changing the composition of the commission. A representative of the State's administration was changed to a senior services provider seat.
- Chapter 67, SLA 05 – Raised the penalty for identity theft crimes (which disproportionately impacts older Alaskans) to the felony level.
- Chapter 52, SLA 06 – Added dental care coverage for Medicaid-eligible adults, noting the research showing a correlation between good dental health and longevity.
- Chapter 08, SLA 06 – Designated the second Wednesday in September, of each year, as "Older Alaskans Day."
- Chapter 64, SLA 06 – Established an Office of Elder Fraud and Assistance, within the Office of Public Advocacy, to investigate complaints of fraud committed against Alaskan residents age 55 or older.
- Chapter 05, SLA 07 – Doubled the number of WWAMI⁶ student slots for Alaskans from ten to 20 per year, to help address Alaska's perspective physician shortage.
- SB 100 of the 25th Legislature – Provided for long-term secure treatment programs for persons with substance abuse or co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.
- SB 69 of the 25th Legislature – Created a civil legal services fund to be used for legal representation of low-income individuals.

Survey results indicated 93 percent of responding senior services providers agree ACoA helps inform the governor and the legislature in decision making, regarding older Alaskans.

⁶ WWAMI is a partnership between the University of Washington School of Medicine and the states of Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho. The WWAMI name is derived from the first letter of each of the five cooperating states. WWAMI's purpose is to provide access to publicly supported medical education across the five-state region.

Determine the extent to which the operation of the board, commission, or agency program has been impeded or enhanced by existing statutes, procedures, and practices that it has adopted, and any other matter, including budgetary, resource, and personnel matters.

The senior population is increasing faster in Alaska than in any other state, except Nevada. In 2006, the Alaskan population – age 60 and over – was more than 71,000. These figures represent increases of nearly 35 percent in the total number of seniors and over 27 percent in the number of people age 65 and over, since the year 2000.⁷ To respond to these dramatic increases in Alaska's senior population, ACoA has advocated for:

- Enhanced senior home- and community-based services to provide additional services to the increasing number of seniors. Grant funding for senior services has remained relatively unchanged for the last five years. Many providers report reducing the scope of services provided, in order to provide a core group of basic services to a greater number of seniors.
- Making behavioral health services more available to seniors. Currently, there are few programs tailored to meet the special behavioral health needs of seniors and few prevention and intervention programs. The need for these services is evidenced by research showing higher than national rates for suicide and abusive drinking for Alaskan seniors as compared to their U.S. counterparts.⁸
- Advocating for an enhanced SeniorCare bill, in addition to other programs such as an expansion of the LIHEAP (Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program), that benefit the health and welfare of older Alaskans.

As currently structured, ACoA staff is made up of four positions: the executive director, two planners, and an administrative assistant. As discussed in the Report Conclusion section, the commission's staff experienced extensive vacancies and turnover after the 2003 reorganization. The current executive director has held the position for less than a year; she was preceded by two prior directors who served for short periods of time between FY 04 and FY 06.

ACoA's executive director has had problems attracting and retaining staff. The ACoA office has also voiced frustrations about filling a planner position. This position has been vacant since February 2007. The minimum qualifications require a master's degree. For more than five months, ACoA tried to find applicants with the minimum qualifications. ACoA has worked with DHSS to restructure the education requirements for this position as a way of generating more interest.

⁷ This information is from the State Plan for Senior Services FY 08-11. As of June 26, 2007 this plan was awaiting final signature of approval by the Assistant Secretary for Aging, Federal Administration on Aging.

⁸ Bureau of Vital Statistics 2000-2004, National Vital Statistics Report 2003; and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2006

Due to the problems described above, ACoA spent much of its time trying to fill positions as well as defining their new role as planner, advocate, and educator after the 2003 reorganization. As a result, ACoA did not prepare annual reports as required by state law for 2003, 2004, and 2005. Additionally, the State Plan for Senior Services for FY 04-06 was extended.

**Schedule of Operating Expenditures and Funding Sources
(Unaudited)**

	<u>FY 05</u>	<u>FY 06</u>	<u>FY 07⁹</u>
Expenditures:			
Personal Services	\$257,737	\$300,121	\$250,350
Travel	51,088	44,585	66,220
Services	39,315	32,415	30,835
Commodities	<u>21,663</u>	<u>7,704</u>	<u>21,890</u>
Total Operating Expenditures:	\$369,803	\$384,825	\$369,295
Funding Sources:			
Interagency Receipts (from federal funds)	\$248,826	\$226,450	\$219,648
General Fund Appropriations	<u>120,977</u>	<u>158,375</u>	<u>149,647</u>
Total Funding	\$369,803	\$384,825	\$369,295

Determine the extent to which the board, commission, or agency has encouraged interested persons to report to it concerning the effect of its regulations and decisions on the effectiveness of service, economy of service, and availability of service that it has provided.

ACoA has, in place, several processes to inform the public and solicit public comment. An example is the development of their recent State Plan for Senior Services for FY 08-11. Public input on plan development was sought four separate times at different locations across the State (Juneau, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and a rural call-in). These comments were recorded, reviewed by the planning committee, and added as an appendix to the plan.

Additionally, the public is encouraged to participate and offer feedback to the commission at its legislative teleconferences. These teleconferences offer an opportunity for ACoA to provide education on legislative issues important to seniors as well as allow the public to report their concerns on the effects of commission decisions. Seventeen legislative teleconference host sites are set up across Alaska to encourage public participation in lawmaking that affects Alaska's senior population.

⁹ FY 07 expenditures and funding sources were determined as of June 30, 2007. These expenditures and funding sources do not include personal services from June 15, 2007 through June 30, 2007; nor, do they include other revenues or miscellaneous charges that may occur throughout the State's reappropriation period which ends August 31, 2007.

Determine the extent to which the board, commission, or agency has encouraged public participation in the making of its regulations and decisions.

In addition to the development of the State Plan for Senior Services for FY 08-11 and legislative teleconferences, each ACoA quarterly meeting has time scheduled for public comment. The public has the opportunity to attend or call into any ACoA meeting, or contact ACoA via their website, concerning any commission decisions.

In our survey, senior services providers were asked if ACoA encourages public participation and input in developing regulations or making other decisions. Survey responses indicated 91 percent agreed they did. Further, 83 percent of survey respondents agreed that ACoA consults and cooperates with their organization about programs for older Alaskans.

Determine the efficiency with which public inquiries or complaints regarding the activities of the board, commission, or agency filed with it, with the department to which a board or commission is administratively assigned, or with the office of victims' rights or the office of the ombudsman have been processed and resolved.

We found no complaints against ACoA. We polled five different "watch-dog" agencies and ACoA's executive director to determine the number of complaints filed against ACoA or its staff. Agencies polled included: the Attorney General's Office; Office of Victims Rights; Office of the Governor; Office of the Ombudsman; and, Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

Determine the extent to which a board or commission that regulates entry into an occupation or profession has presented qualified applicants to serve the public.

Since ACoA does not regulate any occupations or professions, this is not applicable.

Determine the extent to which state personnel practices, including affirmative action requirements, have been complied with by the board, commission, or agency to its own activities and the area of activity or interest.

Our review determined 12 of the 16 commission members appointed, from FY 04 through FY 07, have been appointed in accordance with Alaska statutes. Due to incomplete records at the Office of the Governor, we could not determine whether the other four commissioners were appointed properly.

Determine the extent to which statutory, regulatory, budgeting, or other changes are necessary to enable the agency, board, or commission to better serve the interests of the public and to comply with the factors enumerated in this subsection.

The 2003 reorganization of DHSS moved ACoA from the Department of Administration to DHSS, per former Governor Murkowski's Executive Order 108. This reorganization also created and gave ACoA's grant administration responsibilities to DSDS. Currently, Alaska statutes do not reflect this reorganization (see Recommendation No. 1).

Determine the extent to which the board, commission, or agency has effectively attained its objectives and purposes and the efficiency with which the board, commission, or agency has operated.

Since the 2003 departmental reorganization of DHSS, ACoA was no longer responsible for the administration of grants. This has left ACoA in a better position to attain their objectives of planning for, advocating for, and educating Alaska's seniors. The recently submitted State Plan for Senior Services FY 08-11 has received recognition from the Federal Administration on Aging. Examples of issues and services ACoA has effectively advocated for, on behalf of Alaska's seniors, include:

- Resolution supporting the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation FY 04 and FY 05 capital budget; budget included funding for developing, renovating, and weatherizing senior and special needs housing.
- Letter of support for DHSS' FY 06 budget; letter included specific reference supporting additional Pioneers Home staffing, Nursing Facilities Transition program, and the Adult Public Assistance General Relief program.
- Position paper supporting additional \$500,000 in General Fund/Mental Health Funds for the Flexible Long-Term Care Supports program. The grant program supports seniors with Alzheimer's disease and their families by providing services such as case management, respite care, and chore services.
- Letter of support for U.S. Senate Joint Resolution 3. This resolution urges Congress to increase the Medicare reimbursement rates for Alaska. ACoA sent letters directly to Representative Don Young, Senator Ted Stevens, and Senator Lisa Murkowski detailing the need for an increase in reimbursement rates in order to ensure primary care is available to all seniors in Alaska. ACoA's chairman testified on this subject at a congressional hearing held in February 2007.
- Letter of support for the University of Alaska's Geriatric Education Center.

Results of our senior services provider survey concluded 89 percent of those responding to our survey agree ACoA has played an important advocacy role on behalf of older Alaskans.

In addition to planning and advocating, ACoA works to educate Alaska's senior population. Examples of education projects ACoA has participated in include the following:

- Ad campaign for Older Americans Month – May 2006
- Poster campaign for Older Americans Month – May 2007
- Obtained Governor's Proclamations for Older Americans Month in 2006 and 2007
- Created Alaska Aging Advocacy Network
- Completed a study of senior economic well-being – published January 2007
- ACoA's bimonthly newsletter informs seniors of senior issues

Determine the extent to which the board, commission, or agency duplicates the activities of another governmental agency or the private sector.

ACoA is emerging as a "hub" for seniors across the State. There are various organizations in Alaska; American Association of Retired Persons' (AARP) Capital City Task Force and AgeNet, who advocate for their particular seniors' needs; ACoA advocates for Alaska's seniors as a whole. ACoA also coordinates its planning activities and education activities with other agencies and organization across the State to avoid duplication of services.

X APPENDIX V

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APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results

In the course of our review, we sent the following survey to 92 senior services providers of which 45 responded.

Question No. 1 ACoA encourages public participation and input in developing regulations or making other decisions.

91%	51%	Definitely Agree
	40%	Agree
0%	0%	Disagree
	0%	Definitely Disagree
9%	9%	Not Sure

Question No. 2 ACoA helps to inform the Governor and the legislature in decision making regarding older Alaskans.

93%	52%	Definitely Agree
	41%	Agree
0%	0%	Disagree
	0%	Definitely Disagree
7%	7%	Not Sure

Question No. 3 ACoA encourages the development of municipal commissions and/or community-oriented programs.

89%	46%	Definitely Agree
	43%	Agree
2%	2%	Disagree
	0%	Definitely Disagree
9%	9%	Not Sure

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

Question No. 4 ACoA promotes community education efforts regarding the problems and concerns of older Alaskans.

89%	46%	Definitely Agree
	43%	Agree
4%	2%	Disagree
	2%	Definitely Disagree
7%	7%	Not Sure

Question No. 5 ACoA consults and cooperates with my organization about assistance programs for older Alaskans.

84%	34%	Definitely Agree
	50%	Agree
11%	11%	Disagree
	0%	Definitely Disagree
5%	5%	Not Sure

Question No. 6 ACoA has been effective in educating your community and/or others around the State of important legislative developments affecting older Alaskans.

79%	34%	Definitely Agree
	45%	Agree
16%	16%	Disagree
	0%	Definitely Disagree
5%	5%	Not Sure

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

Question No. 7 ACoA has played an important advocacy role on behalf of older Alaskans.

91%	55%	Definitely Agree
	36%	Agree
2%	2%	Disagree
	0%	Definitely Disagree
7%	7%	Not Sure

Question No. 8 A public need exists for the continuation of ACoA.

93%	58%	Definitely Agree
	35%	Agree
0%	0%	Disagree
	0%	Definitely Disagree
7%	7%	Not Sure

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

Our survey respondents included a variety of senior services providers from all regions of the State. In our survey we asked what specific benefits would be lost if ACoA were allowed to sunset, how ACoA has positively or negatively affected these providers, and we invited comments regarding various aspects of the commission's operations. Below is a summary of comments we received, edited to some extent to enhance readability.

Specific benefits that Alaska's seniors would lose if ACoA were allowed to sunset:

Advocacy/Voice to State Government:

- Advocacy on behalf of seniors.
- The advocacy efforts would cease to exist as providers and caregivers are much too busy to lead such an effort. I think it is important to have a central agency that can coordinate and disseminate information that is of concern to seniors.
- A voice in the legislature. State advocacy services to all seniors of Alaska.
- Alaska seniors need a representation for advocacy at the commission level. Many agencies attempt to assist and advocate for senior issues, but due to the rising cost of doing business – and the extreme difficulty for agencies to just provide services – it is almost impossible to have the manpower to devote to advocacy issues.
- Advocacy for senior programs and services.
- Advocacy efforts and team work with other state agencies.
- They would lose advocacy for elders, education, and prevention programs, also their inspiring support to help other organizations. They are a key to spreading out information to our rural communities by working together. Their network chain is helpful.
- An affordable lobbying voice for Alaskan seniors, advocating the need to maintain meaningful and quality in-home services, saving the state thousands of dollars in premature institutionalization of the elderly.
- Seniors would be losing the recognized voice of advocacy. We try to advocate as much as possible but it seems we are never heard except through ACoA.
- The ACoA is proof that the State recognizes the importance of its senior community and its needs. Seniors need that voice within the structure of government.

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

- The organized effort to keep the legislature informed about seniors' needs would be less effective.
- We would lose the voice of the Alaskan Seniors in our government.
- The ACoA helps to keep service providers aware of legislature that is pending that would affect the services we provide.
- Alaskan seniors would not have the advocacy and support – without ACOA – with the Governor's Office, legislative body, DHSS, and other entities in support of the Older Alaskans Act.
- Legislative Advocacy - Keeping seniors fully informed of issues regarding welfare of State programs and services.
- Seniors need support! This is one way it can happen. Some Kenai Peninsula Senior Centers need assistance and support for negotiating Medicaid cost reimbursement increase ... we receive a Medicaid reimbursement rate of \$8.32/per meal and transportation at \$6.34. This is far below averages around the State and our costs continue to rise. Our seniors will suffer. The senior centers provide a great service to our community as far as outreach, information and assistance, meals (congregate and home meals), transportation. The senior centers on the Peninsula provide at least 92 percent of the transportation to seniors. Seniors need to be allowed to have transportation through their senior centers ... using the NTS grant. Many cannot afford our "CARTS" system. We need ACoA to advocate for the senior centers. We need ACoA to advocate for our mentally ill seniors that need someone to monitor meds in their homes. It is taking too long for them to get assistance and get through the system and approved. We need more \$ for our NTS programs ... funding is flat and our clients are increasing as well as their needs are increasing as they "age in place."

Quality of Care:

- The quality of care for seniors would decline due to a lack of training and support for caregivers. There would be less public awareness; therefore, seniors may not be provided access to the services they need to maintain their quality of life and overall well-being.
- The seniors of Alaska receive so many benefits by the existence of the ACoA. Without the ACoA, seniors would not know who to contact about specific services available to them. This organization should never sunset. We have an elder population that continues to grow and this organization is invaluable.

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

Funding:

- We would lose a large portion of our operating costs in providing seniors of our community hot nutritious meals. Home-delivered meals to the homebound. Transportation to and from medical, grocery, and social outings. Funding could be cut for the *Senior Voice* paper.
- Grants to Elderly Programs - Who will we answer to?
- Access to Federal Funds
- Funding
- Alaska's seniors need an organization like the ACoA to push for adequate funding and resources for older Alaskans so that they can afford to remain in our state in their last years.

Other:

- There have been a number of name changes in the agency that my organization deals with for program operation funds. I am unsure what ACoA does.
- Since the Native Village of Gambell does not directly work with state agencies on ACoA, we are not sure what we would lose.
- There seems to be a rallying of providers to voice opinions and that may be lost to some degree.

How has ACoA positively or negatively affected your organization?

Positively:

- My agency and community have benefited from having a local resident on the ACOA board. She is our conduit for information and advocacy.
- ACoA helped to obtain increased grant funding for Home- and Community-based Services which are vital to the well-being of frail and cognitively impaired older adults.
- ACoA is pro-in-home supports because seniors prefer these to being institutionalized and they save Alaska money.

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

- We appreciate all the funding we receive to provide services to our Elders, but the funding is limited so we can only provide limited services.
- Networking and coordination of senior programs has a positive affect and ACoA has been helpful in bridging those gaps in our community.
- Support of keeping elders home verses institutionalization which has allowed for the continuation of the HCB grants.
- Providing trainings and workshops on senior topics.
- ACoA has been instrumental in keeping the needs of seniors well-represented. Their work directly affects the ability of senior centers to provide services to those seniors in need of supportive and health services.
- Caregivers for some of my senior clients have been able to attend training sessions through ACoA which has greatly improved their awareness of issues affecting seniors and given them a greater ability to provide for their senior clients/family members! They have been an invaluable reference for obtaining information for both me and the community. I have been able to attend several trainings which have proven to be very helpful and have given me a greater understanding on many of the issues and concerns I frequently encounter.
- Advocating for senior issues, benefits, and new initiatives in working with AMHTA.
- ACoA has helped train staff on effective ways to reach Alaska's seniors in promoting longevity and independence. They also fund a large part of our annual budget in providing the seniors with meals and transportation. Home-delivered meals and in-home checks to the homebound.
- I have contacted them directly with specific problems at my agency. They have been helpful in seeking funding sources and are overall a great resource regarding resource and referrals.
- ACoA has advocated for the senior housing needs of Sterling and has kept us informed of grant opportunities when available.
- ACoA has always worked well with our organization. We need this entity to help disperse information, doing prevention education, and great advocacy work.
- Whenever I have a question regarding services that an elder might be able to receive through our state, I call ACoA.

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

- Effectively help UTDC provide services to the elderly in both Upper Tanana & Glenallen Area for years and continue to do so without much interruption.
- Letting us know what is being discussed by the state that will have an effect on the senior population. This has resulted in many seniors sending legislative POMs that let them know what they need in order to help them live quality lives. An example is senior care and the longevity bonus.
- ACoA represents the views of providers and seniors during the legislative process, as in its support of the "Keep the Elders Home" initiative. It also seeks to represent the views of provider networking entities such as AgeNet.
- ACoA is a voice for all seniors in the state of Alaska. They have been instrumental in leveraging \$ from the state for Home- and Community-based services.
- ACoA has had a positive impact keeping senior centers, other agencies, and Alaskan seniors informed through legislative teleconferences, training seminars, etc. of key senior bills and issues, programs and services, and future needs.

Negatively:

- There were no negative comments about ACoA.

Other:

- Used to sponsor Senior Advocacy Coalition but stopped this year.
- ACoA needs to focus more on small communities.
- Sometimes our senior needs are so great, priorities have to be decided, what I believe is a specific need may not be what ACoA believes are priorities ... I understand that ... I still am not sure our state is ready for the "Big Boom" of seniors aging in place with funding staying so flat ... we need funds to assist the increasing population.
- We do not have positive, nor negative, operations with ACoA since we have no State programs on ACoA.

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

General Comments:

- It is a well-known entity and represents the needs of seniors well.
- Thank you for what you do for our Seniors! I know you are trying ... I don't believe the legislature always understands how great our need for help is!
- We need ACoA because people that work professionally with seniors are so overworked and underpaid that we are literally unable to do the types of advocacy and public education necessary for a better tomorrow for seniors in this state.
- I highly recommend that ACoA continues their services because they are the nearest thing to Alaska having a statewide triple-A organization that other states in the U.S. have.
- ACoA has done a wonderful job in advocating for seniors and providing access to needed services. It would be very unfortunate if this Commission were to be terminated. I am not sure where I would turn to for training, support, and answers to the many questions regarding care of seniors!! PLEASE allow this Commission to continue its much needed service to our communities!
- ACoA is a great agency and the State would be negligent in allowing this to fold. With Alaska growing at the rate it is with senior growth and the issues that go along with aging, we need the ACoA more than ever
- ACoA represents a voice for seniors who often have no other voice speaking on their behalf.
- This organization should continue to exist. Without them, several seniors and also organizations that provide services to seniors would be lost.
- The Elders would be losing a valuable resource if ACoA is actually dissolved. I would hope that this decision is not carved in stone and a reversal is a possible.
- I have seen positive work produced from the commission this past year and would like to see it continue. The aging population is growing rapidly and the insight and support of the individuals on the commission is greatly valued.
- The State should work closely with Municipal governments to provide these much-needed programs in rural Alaska. Villages seem to be excluded on most ACoA programs. We don't see those programs at rural Alaska.
- ACoA is federally mandated. DHSS needs to listen more to what they have to say!!!

APPENDIX A

Department of Health and Social Services
Alaska Commission on Aging
Senior Services Providers Survey Results
(continued)

- Now that the ACoA is not actively involved in grant making, it is able to advocate more strongly for improvements in needed services and funding.
- We hope they can continue serving the frail, elderly, homebound, widows, veterans and low-income seniors.
- ACoA is an extremely important entity for Alaskan seniors, and the commission should remain a strategic part of senior services, and agencies.
- ACoA is necessary to the senior population as advocate and information both within the Legislature and out.
- Do Not get rid of this very helpful organization network that has connection for all Alaskans; which serves all Alaskans Well.
- As Alaska's population continues to age both in numbers and as a percentage of our communities – there needs to be an extensive effort to educate government, businesses and the community as well regarding their needs. Significant budget increases from the State to providers will be required to meet their needs. Alaska has a long way to go and will not be able to count on the Federal Government to provide increasing resources as they will follow a much slower pattern of growth than we will here. We have just begun to get the message in Alaska; we are aging, and must invest to enable seniors to remain here as functioning Alaskans. To accomplish that we need more than just ACoA's continued presence, but need to expand advocacy on behalf of seniors at a much greater pace. Time is moving faster than we realize, and we will all be seniors soon enough. Will you and I be able to continue to live here? I hope so.
- The ACoA does not benefit the rural villages. Yes, a Native Elder sits on the board, but he is a very small voice for our rural villages. When program are cut, the Rural Villages are hurt the most. Many of Elders are migrating to the cities for services because they are none in the villages. This migration is flooding our already full services, is ACoA planning for this migrating as funding is cut for the villages?
- ACoA need to consider cost of living & inflation cost and address the issue.
- Although we have tried to make the ACoA teleconferences we have had many things going on that has made it impossible to listen to all.

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110601
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PHONE: (907) 465-3030
FAX: (907) 465-3068

August 3, 2007

RECEIVED

AUG 03 2007

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

Pat Davidson, CPA
Legislative Auditor
Legislative Audit
P.O. 113300
Juneau, AK 99811-3300

RE: Response to Preliminary Audit, Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska
Commission on Aging

Dear Ms. Davidson:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Preliminary Audit, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA). Our response to the recommendation is as follows:

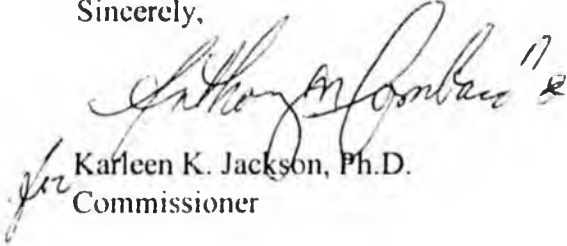
Recommendation No. 1

The legislature should consider amending state law to reflect ACoA's current mission.

The department concurs with this recommendation. DHSS will work with the Alaska Commission on Aging to propose legislation to align the statutes with their current mission.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Bill Hogan at 907-465-1610 or bill.hogan@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,


for Karleen K. Jackson, Ph.D.
Commissioner

cc: Bill Hogan, Deputy Commissioner
Janet Clarke, Assistant Commissioner
Elmer Lindstrom, Special Assistant
Denise Daniello, Executive Director, ACoA

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STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Alaska Commission on Aging

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

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July 20, 2007

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JUL 24 2007

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

Pat Davidson
Division of Legislative Audit
P.O. Box 113300
Juneau, AK 99811-3300

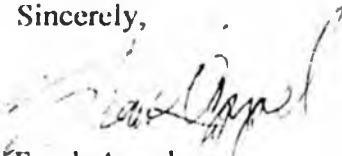
Re: Preliminary Audit Report on: Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Commission on Aging, Sunset Review, July 3, 2007

Dear Auditor Davidson,

The Alaska Commission on Aging agrees with the recommendations in the preliminary audit report. In June, I communicated suggested changes to the current Alaska Statutes to the Deputy Commissioner for Health and Social Services. The Deputy Commissioner acknowledged my suggestions and indicated he would form a committee to review those suggestions and draft statute revisions for presentation, review and approval of the legislature.

Thank you for your report.

Sincerely,



Frank Appel
Alaska Commission on Aging

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HB

279



Alaska State Legislature
Representative Andrea Doll
House District 4

Sponsor Statement
HB 279 Commission on Aging Duties and Powers

House Bill 279 conforms the statutory duties and powers of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) with existing conditions.

In 2003, Governor Murkowski issued Executive Order #108 which moved the ACoA from the Department of Administration to the Department of Health and Social Services. Several functional changes, including ACoA's grant-making authority, were also modified in the executive order.

In 2007, ACoA went through a Legislative Audit sunset review. As part of that review, the auditors recommended amending the statute to conform with the conditions set forth in XO 108.

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) consists of eleven member including three commissioners, the chair of the Pioneers' Homes Advisory Board and seven public members appointed by the governor. Six of seven public members must be older Alaskans, and all serve four year terms. The commission is staffed by an executive director with a staff of three. ACoA advocates for state policy, public and private partnerships, and citizen involvement to better enable Alaskans to age successfully in our homes, in our communities or as near as possible to our communities and families. The commission works to ensure that seniors live with dignity and respect and have an opportunity to receive services to promote and enhance their physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health.

The Commission was established under AS 44.21.200 in 1982 and is now housed in the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The ACoA collaborates with the Department, provider agencies and the public to develop the Alaska's State Plan for Services as well as funding formulas to allocate pass-thru grant funds received from the federal government. The ACoA also collaborates with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for project and program development, and makes funding recommendations as required by Alaska Statutes.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Division of Legislative Audit



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Juneau, AK 99811-3300
(907) 465-3830
FAX (907) 465-2347
legaudit@legis.state.ak.us

July 3, 2007

Members of the Legislative Budget
and Audit Committee:

In accordance with the provisions of Title 24 and Title 44 of the Alaska Statutes (sunset legislation), we have reviewed the activities of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA). The attached report is submitted for your review.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING SUNSET REVIEW

July 3, 2007

Audit Control Number

06-20054-07

This sunset review was conducted as required by AS 44.66.050 and under the authority of AS 24.20.271(1). Alaska Statute 44.66.050(c) lists criteria to be used to assess the demonstrated public need for a given board, commission, agency, or program, subject to the sunset review process. Currently, under AS 44.66.010(a)(4) the commission terminates on June 30, 2008. If the legislature takes no action to extend this date, the commission would be allowed one year in which to conclude its administrative operations.

In our opinion, ACoA is helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and productive lives. We recommend the legislature adopt legislation extending ACoA's termination date to June 30, 2016.

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government audit standards. Fieldwork procedures utilized in the course of developing the findings and discussion presented in this report are discussed in Objectives, Scope, and Methodology.

Pat Davidson, CPA
Legislative Auditor

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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The legislature should consider amending state law to reflect the Alaska Commission on Aging's (ACoA or commission) current mission.

The grant administration responsibilities for ACoA, as defined in state law,¹ are no longer performed by the commission; rather, these duties are now being done by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS)

Executive Order 108 established DSDS within DHSS on July 1, 2003. This new division assumed all policy, program, and administrative responsibilities for grant administration previously performed by ACoA in the Department of Administration (DOA). Further, this executive order reestablished ACoA within DHSS. ACoA retained all the policy, program, and administrative responsibilities it had previously performed within DOA, with the exception of those grant administration functions assigned to DSDS. However, Alaska statutes were not updated to accurately reflect these changes.

The following current Alaska Statutes are not being performed by ACoA:

1. AS 47.45.240(a) *The commission shall: (7) with the approval of the commissioner of health and social services, set policy for the administration of federal programs subject to state control as provided under 42 U.S.C. 3001-30058ee (Older Americans Act, as amended); (8) with the approval of the commissioner of health and social services, set policy for the administration of federal programs as provided under AS 47.65.*
2. Sec. 47.65.010. *Older Alaskans service programs. An amount to carry out the provisions of AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050 may be appropriated annually by the legislature. The amount appropriated shall be fully distributed by the Alaska Commission on Aging to sponsors of older Alaskans service programs in accordance with the provisions of AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050.*
3. Sec. 47.45.230. *Executive director.... (2) administer, with the approval of the commissioner of health and social services, federal programs subject to state control as provided under 42 U.S.C. 3001 - 3058ee (Older Americans Act), as amended; and (3) administer, with the approval of the commissioner of health and social services, state programs as provided under AS 47.65.*

As a result, ACoA has not accomplished some of its statutory duties and responsibilities as currently written. The ACoA chairman and DHSS commissioner should pursue changes to Alaska statutes so that they are reflective of ACoA's current role.

¹ AS 47.45.24(a)(7-8), AS 47.65.010-050, and AS 47.45.230

STATE OF ALASKA

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

P.O. BOX 110601
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0601
PHONE: (907) 465-3030
FAX: (907) 465-3068

October 31, 2007

The Honorable Andrea Doll
Alaska State Representative
State Capitol, Room 426
Juneau, AK 99811-0601

Dear Representative Doll:

Thank you for your letter informing me of your intention to introduce legislation regarding the Alaska Commission on Aging.

It is my understanding that you will be introducing one bill to extend the commission for eight years, and another bill to implement the recommendations of the July 3, 2007 Division of Legislative Audit sunset review.

Regarding the extension, I fully agree with Legislative Audit's conclusion that ACoA "is helping older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and productive lives," and I support the recommendation to extend the termination date to June 30, 2016. I was also pleased to note that the review concluded that ACoA has emerged from the 2003 reorganization as a "respected planner, educator, and advocator for Alaska's seniors."

I have also reviewed your proposed legislation updating statutes to reflect duties no longer performed by ACoA. These duties include responsibility for grant administration, which was assigned to the Division of Senior and Disability Services in the reorganization. I would encourage you to work closely with the Division of Legislative Audit to ensure its recommendations are implemented correctly.

Sincerely,



Karleen K. Jackson, Ph.D.

Commissioner

cc: Bill Hogan, Deputy Commissioner for Family, Community & Integrated Services
Sherry Hill, Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs
Wilda Laughlin, Special Assistant

AMENDMENT

by Representative _____

on HB279/A

Page 4, after Lines 13-16

delete

Sec. 47.45.230. Executive director. The executive director of the commission shall assist the department with the formulation of

[(1) FORMULATE] a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies the concerns and needs of older Alaskans and present that plan to the commission[;

replace with

Sec. 47.45.230. Executive director. The executive director of the commission shall

[(1)] formulate and submit to the department a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies the concerns and needs of older Alaskans and present that plan to the commission[;

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 279(HES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Offered:

Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES DOLL AND KERTTULA

Adm

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to the duties and powers of the Alaska Commission on Aging and the**
2 **Department of Health and Social Services."**

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

4 *** Section 1.** AS 47.05.010 is amended to read:

5 **Sec. 47.05.010. Duties of department.** The Department of Health and Social
6 Services shall

7 (1) administer adult public assistance, the Alaska temporary assistance
8 program, and all other assistance programs, and receive and spend money made
9 available to it;

10 (2) adopt regulations necessary for the conduct of its business and for
11 carrying out federal and state laws granting adult public assistance, temporary cash
12 assistance, diversion payments, or self-sufficiency services for needy families under
13 the Alaska temporary assistance program, and other assistance;

14 (3) establish minimum standards for personnel employed by the

1 department and adopt necessary regulations to maintain those standards;

2 (4) require those bonds and undertakings from persons employed by it
3 that, [WHICH] in its judgment, are necessary, and pay the premiums on them;

4 (5) cooperate with the federal government in matters of mutual
5 concern pertaining to adult public assistance, the Alaska temporary assistance
6 program, and other forms of public assistance;

7 (6) make the reports, in the form and containing the information, that
8 the federal government from time to time requires;

9 (7) cooperate with the federal government, its agencies, or
10 instrumentalities in establishing, extending, and strengthening services for the
11 protection and care of homeless, dependent, and neglected children in danger of
12 becoming delinquent, and receive and expend funds available to the department by the
13 federal government, the state, or its political subdivisions for that purpose;

14 (8) cooperate with the federal government in adopting state plans to
15 make the state eligible for federal matching in appropriate categories of assistance, and
16 in all matters of mutual concern, including adoption of the methods of administration
17 that are found by the federal government to be necessary for the efficient operation of
18 welfare programs;

19 (9) adopt regulations, not inconsistent with law, defining need,
20 prescribing the conditions of eligibility for assistance, and establishing standards for
21 determining the amount of assistance that an eligible person is entitled to receive; the
22 amount of the assistance is sufficient when, added to all other income and resources
23 available to an individual, it provides the individual with a reasonable subsistence
24 compatible with health and well-being; an individual who meets the requirements for
25 eligibility for assistance shall be granted the assistance promptly upon application for
26 it;

27 (10) grant to a person claiming or receiving assistance and who is
28 aggrieved because of the department's action or failure to act, reasonable notice and an
29 opportunity for a fair hearing by the department, and the department shall adopt
30 regulations relative to this;

31 (11) enter into reciprocal agreements with other states relative to

1 public assistance, welfare services, and institutional care that are considered advisable;

2 (12) establish the requirements of residence for public assistance,
3 welfare services, and institutional care that are considered advisable, subject to the
4 limitations of other laws of the state, or law or regulation imposed as conditions for
5 federal financial participation;

6 (13) establish the divisions and local offices that are considered
7 necessary or expedient to carry out a duty or authority assigned to it and appoint and
8 employ the assistants and personnel that are necessary to carry on the work of the
9 divisions and offices, and fix the compensation of the assistants or employees, except
10 that a person engaged in business as a retail vendor of general merchandise, or a
11 member of the immediate family of a person who is so engaged, may not serve as an
12 acting, temporary, or permanent local agent of the department, unless the
13 commissioner of health and social services certifies in writing to the governor, with
14 relation to a particular community, that no other qualified person is available in the
15 community to serve as local welfare agent; for the purposes of this paragraph, a
16 "member of the immediate family" includes a spouse, child, parent, brother, sister,
17 parent-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law;

18 (14) provide education and health-related services and referrals
19 designed to reduce the number of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and the number of
20 induced pregnancy terminations in the state;

21 (15) investigate reports of abuse, neglect, or misappropriation of
22 property by certified nurse aides in facilities licensed by the department under
23 AS 47.32;

24 (16) establish state policy relating to and administer federal
25 programs subject to state control as provided under 42 U.S.C. 3001 - 3058e
26 (Older Americans Act of 1965), as amended, and related federal regulations;

27 (17) administer the older Alaskans service grants under
28 AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050 and the adult day care and family respite care grants
29 under AS 47.65.100.

30 * Sec. 2. AS 47.30.036 is amended to read:

31 **Sec. 47.30.036. Duties of the board.** The board shall

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- (1) preserve and protect the trust corpus under AS 37.14.009;
- (2) coordinate with other state agencies involved with programs affecting persons in need of mental health services;
- (3) review and consider the recommendations submitted under AS 44.29.140(2), AS 47.30.666(6), AS 47.45.240(a)(8) [AS 47.45.240(a)(10)], and AS 47.80.090(13);
- (4) adopt bylaws governing its meetings, selection of officers, proceedings, and other aspects of board procedure;
- (5) make an annual written report of its activities to the governor and the public and notify the legislature that the report is available; and
- (6) fulfill its obligations under AS 47.30.046.

* Sec. 3. AS 47.45.230 is amended to read:

Sec. 47.45.230. Executive director. The executive director of the commission shall

[(1)] formulate and submit to the department a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies the concerns and needs of older Alaskans and present that plan to the commission [;

(2) ADMINISTER, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, FEDERAL PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO STATE CONTROL AS PROVIDED UNDER 42 U.S.C. 3001 - 3058ee (OLDER AMERICANS ACT), AS AMENDED; AND

(3) ADMINISTER, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, STATE PROGRAMS AS PROVIDED UNDER AS 47.65].

* Sec. 4. AS 47.45.240(a) is amended to read:

(a) The commission shall

(1) subject to review by the department, approve a comprehensive statewide plan that identifies and addresses the concerns and needs of older Alaskans and, with reference to the approved plan, prepare and submit to the governor and legislature an annual analysis and evaluation of the services that are provided to older Alaskans;

1 (2) make recommendations directly to the governor and the legislature
2 with respect to legislation, regulations, and appropriations for programs or services
3 that benefit older Alaskans;

4 (3) encourage the development of municipal commissions serving
5 older Alaskans and community-oriented programs and services for the benefit of older
6 Alaskans;

7 (4) employ an executive director who serves at the pleasure of the
8 commission;

9 (5) help older Alaskans lead dignified, independent, and useful lives;

10 (6) request and receive reports and audits from state agencies and local
11 institutions concerned with the conditions and needs of older Alaskans;

12 (7) [WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER OF
13 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, SET POLICY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION
14 OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO STATE CONTROL AS PROVIDED
15 UNDER 42 U.S.C. 3001 - 3058ee (OLDER AMERICANS ACT), AS AMENDED;

16 (8) WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER OF
17 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, SET POLICY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION
18 OF STATE PROGRAMS AS PROVIDED UNDER AS 47.65;

19 (9)] give assistance, on request, to the senior housing office in the
20 Alaska Housing Finance Corporation in administration of the senior housing loan
21 program under AS 18.56.710 - 18.56.799 and in the performance of the office's other
22 duties under AS 18.56.700; and

23 (8) [(10)] provide to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, for its
24 review and consideration, recommendations concerning the integrated comprehensive
25 mental health program for persons who are described in (d) of this section and the use
26 of the money in the mental health trust settlement income account in a manner
27 consistent with regulations adopted under AS 47.30.031.

28 * Sec. 5. AS 47.45.240(b) is amended to read:

29 (b) To accomplish its duties, the commission may

30 (1) review, evaluate, and comment upon state programs concerned
31 with the problems and the needs of older Alaskans;

1 (2) collect facts and statistics, and make studies of conditions and
2 problems pertaining to the employment, health, housing, financial security, social
3 welfare, and other concerns that bear upon the well-being of older Alaskans;

4 (3) provide information about public programs that would be of
5 interest or benefit to older Alaskans;

6 (4) appoint special committees, which may include persons who are
7 not members of the commission, to complete necessary studies;

8 (5) promote community education efforts regarding the problems and
9 concerns of older Alaskans;

10 (6) contract for necessary services;

11 (7) consult and cooperate with persons, organizations, and groups
12 interested in or concerned with programs of assistance to older Alaskans;

13 (8) advocate improved programs of benefit to older Alaskans; and

14 (9) recommend [SET] standards for levels of services for older
15 Alaskans for programs administered by the department [COMMISSION; AND

16 (10) ADOPT REGULATIONS NECESSARY FOR THE
17 ADMINISTRATION OF AS 47.45.200 - 47.45.290 AND TO COMPLY WITH
18 FEDERAL LAW].

19 * Sec. 6. AS 47.45.290 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

20 (3) "department" means the Department of Health and Social Services.

21 * Sec. 7. AS 47.65.010 is amended to read:

22 **Sec. 47.65.010. Older Alaskans service programs.** An amount to carry out
23 the provisions of AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050 may be appropriated annually by the
24 legislature. The amount appropriated shall be fully distributed by the department
25 [ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING] to sponsors of older Alaskans service
26 programs in accordance with the provisions of AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050.

27 * Sec. 8. AS 47.65.020 is amended to read:

28 **Sec. 47.65.020. Grants for community service programs.** Not less than 60
29 percent of the amount appropriated by the legislature for older Alaskans service
30 programs under AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050 shall be allocated annually by the
31 department [COMMISSION] as community program grants to sponsors of older

1 Alaskans service programs. Payments shall be made on the basis of applications
2 submitted to the department [COMMISSION] by sponsors of community programs.

3 * Sec. 9. AS 47.65.030 is amended to read:

4 **Sec. 47.65.030. Pilot project grants.** (a) The balance of the amount
5 appropriated for older Alaskans service programs under AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050 not
6 allocated under AS 47.65.020 shall be allocated annually by the department
7 [COMMISSION] as grants to support pilot projects for the benefit of older Alaskans
8 under this section.

9 (b) The department [COMMISSION] shall adopt standards for pilot project
10 grants and, after adoption of the standards as regulations, in accordance with AS 44.62
11 (Administrative Procedure Act), shall apply the standards to determine eligibility of
12 applicants for pilot project grants. In awarding pilot project grants, the department
13 [COMMISSION] shall

14 (1) enter into agreements with the project sponsor to operate one or
15 more of the selected pilot projects consistent with the standards adopted;

16 (2) monitor and evaluate, in a written report, each pilot project; the
17 report must include

18 (A) a description of the project and of the persons served by it;

19 (B) the problems presented by the persons served by the
20 project;

21 (C) a description of the problems most effectively handled by
22 the project; and

23 (D) an estimate of projected cost of operation of the project for
24 the next three succeeding years.

25 * Sec. 10. AS 47.65.040(a) is amended to read:

26 (a) Except as provided in (f) of this section, a sponsor receiving a grant under
27 AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050 shall contribute to the total cost of the program or project.
28 The contribution may be in cash or in-kind services. The amount of the sponsor's
29 required contribution is determined by the application of the following formula:
30 average per capita full and true value of all property in the municipality or community
31 in which the project or program takes place divided by the average per capita full and

1 true value of all property in the state, and then multiplied by the contribution
2 percentage to the estimated total program or project cost as determined by the
3 department [COMMISSION] at the time of approval of a grant application. However,
4 the amount of the sponsor's contribution may not amount to more than 10 percent of
5 the total program or project cost.

6 * Sec. 11. AS 47.65.040(c) is amended to read:

7 (c) If an application is submitted for a program or project in a municipality or
8 community for which no average per capita full and true property value determination
9 has been made,

10 (1) if the population of the municipality or community is 750 or more,
11 the department [COMMISSION] shall request the state assessor to compute the
12 average per capita full and true property value of that municipality or community and
13 report it;

14 (2) if the population is less than 750, the department
15 [COMMISSION] may substitute for the average per capita full and true value of
16 property in the municipality or community an amount equal to the average per capita
17 full and true value of property in the smallest municipality for which that amount has
18 been determined by the state assessor.

19 * Sec. 12. AS 47.65.040(e) is amended to read:

20 (e) The grant awarded by the department [COMMISSION] may not exceed
21 the estimated total program or project cost as determined by the department
22 [COMMISSION] less the contribution by the sponsor determined in accordance with
23 this section.

24 * Sec. 13. AS 47.65.040(f) is amended to read:

25 (f) When awarding a grant to support a pilot project under AS 47.65.010 -
26 47.65.050, the department [COMMISSION] may waive all or part of the sponsor
27 contribution required under this section if waiver is in the public interest. The
28 department [COMMISSION] shall adopt regulations establishing standards for
29 granting waivers under this subsection.

30 * Sec. 14. AS 47.65.050 is amended to read:

31 **Sec. 47.65.050. Administrative requirements.** (a) Payments received by a

1 sponsor under AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050 may be used only to meet costs of services
2 that [WHICH] the department [COMMISSION] has determined directly benefit
3 older Alaskans. A payment may not be made by the department [COMMISSION]
4 under this section unless the department [COMMISSION] determines that the
5 sponsor

6 (1) meets accepted standards of fiscal accountability for public funds;

7 (2) can demonstrate, when requested, the actual cost of services that it
8 is providing for the benefit of older Alaskans; and

9 (3) agrees to make available, upon request, all fiscal information
10 relating to service for which payments are provided under AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050.

11 (b) The department [COMMISSION] may not make payments to a sponsor
12 whose program includes family respite care services or home care services unless the
13 sponsor has agreed to request criminal history record information as permitted by P.L.
14 105-277 and AS 12.62 for the individual who will provide the services within 10
15 business days after the individual is hired to provide the services and review the
16 information within five business days after receiving it.

17 * Sec. 15. AS 47.65.100(a) is amended to read:

18 (a) In addition to administering grants for adult day care programs and family
19 respite care services for older Alaskans under AS 47.65.010 - 47.65.050, the
20 department [COMMISSION] may make grants under this section from funds
21 otherwise available to it for adult day care programs and family respite care services
22 for frail older persons and other similarly disabled adults.

23 * Sec. 16. AS 47.65.100(b) is amended to read:

24 (b) In order to fund grants under this section, the department
25 [COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL
26 SERVICES] may seek and enter into contracts or grants with any party, including
27 reimbursable service agreements with other state agencies.

28 * Sec. 17. AS 47.65.100(c) is amended to read:

29 (c) The department [COMMISSION] shall, by regulation, set fees for
30 services provided under this section. The fees must be based on a sliding scale formula
31 that takes into account the client's income.

1 * **Sec. 18.** AS 47.65.100(e) is amended to read:

2 (e) The department [COMMISSION] may not award a grant under this
3 section for family respite care services or for adult day care services that include home
4 care services unless the grantee has agreed to request criminal history record
5 information as permitted by P.L. 105-277 and AS 12.62 for the individual who will
6 provide the services within 10 business days after the individual is hired to provide the
7 services and review the information within five business days after receiving it.

8 * **Sec. 19.** AS 47.65.290(3) is repealed and reenacted to read:

9 (3) "department" means the Department of Health and Social Services;

HB

306

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 3/27/08
TO: House HESS Committee
FROM: Rep. Les Gara
RE: Summary of Changes in CS for HB 306

Below is a summary of changes to the Committee Substitute for HB 306 (25-LS1228\W)

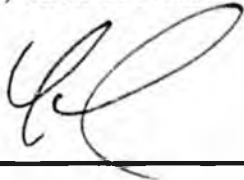
- Title Change
 - Page 1, Lines 1-2
 - "An Act providing for the establishment and implementation of a statewide early childhood education plan and guidelines."
- Sections 1, 2, and 4 were deleted from the previous version of the bill
- Section 1 (formerly Sec. 3)
 - Page 3, Lines 11-12
 - (16) Language "and implement" deleted.
 - Language now reads "devise [and implement] a statewide early childhood education plan for students three and four years of age"
 - Page 3, Line 17
 - (16) (B) after "Head Start," language inserted "to the extent permitted by law"
- Section 3
 - Page 4, Lines 5-10
 - New language added directing the Department of Education and Early Development to prepare and submit a report to the legislature on an early childhood education plan by January 15, 2009.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 17, 2008
TO: Rep. Peggy Wilson, Chair of House HESS Committee
FROM: Rep. Les Gara 
RE: Testimony for HB 306

Representative Wilson,

I anticipate the following people will be testifying in support of HB306 tomorrow.

- Debi Baldwin, Rural CAP (off-net teleconference)
- Candace Winkler, Child Care Connection (off-net teleconference)
- Albert Rinchart, Tlingit and Haida Head Start Program (in person)
- Abbe Hensley, Executive Director of Best Beginnings (teleconference)

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks.



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Les Gara

Representative Mary Nelson

Representative Scott Kawasaki

Representative Beth Kerttula

Representative Max Gruenberg

State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska 99801

HB 306: Alaska Voluntary Pre-Elementary Early Education Act

Sponsor Statement

Alaska remains one of only 10 states that does not provide pre-Kindergarten education to its children on a statewide basis. HB 306 seeks to add Alaska to the ranks of the vast majority of states that have recognized the validity of studies showing that children who benefit from early education earn more money as adults, enter the job market in much larger numbers, obtain college education in higher numbers, remain off public assistance in greater numbers, and remain out of jail in much greater numbers. A government report published by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 53 percent of inmates are either illiterate or possess a very low literacy level.

Alaska has a responsibility to provide the best education possible for its children. Currently, outside of a few school district classrooms, the state only provides pre-K education through the Head Start program, which is only available to the poorest students, and which is underfunded (state funding has not risen since 2002). Due to underfunding, the Alaska Head Start Association estimates that more than 50% of the children who qualify cannot receive Head Start education. Our Head Start program has consistently lagged far behind its need. Providing early public education opportunities is a crucial stepping stone to brightening the future of young Alaskans.

Extensive research shows that a child's intellectual development is especially important before age six. A study by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2004 found that children who attended state-funded pre-Kindergarten programs demonstrated improvements in vocabulary 31% greater than those who did not participate, and 44% greater in math. Young children who receive high quality early education do better in school academically, are better behaved in classes, and are more likely to stay in school, graduate, and go on to attend college.

The beneficial impact of early education also extends to the economy with multiple studies showing that funds invested in early education pay dividends in the long run. Every dollar invested in high-quality pre-kindergarten programs save taxpayers up to \$7. Pre-K results in savings by reducing the need for remedial and special education, welfare, and criminal justice services. An ongoing study of 40-year-old adults in Michigan who participated in the 1962 Perry Preschool Project found that adults with pre-K were more likely to be employed and earned 33 percent higher average income than their peers who did not have state-funded early education.

Additionally, a study prepared for the SEED program at the University of Alaska Southeast states that 87 percent of Alaska residents think it is important for state government to provide financial support for early education and child care.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA
REPRESENTATIVE MARY NELSON
REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT KAWASAKI
REPRESENTATIVE BETH KERTTULA
REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG

HB 306: Alaska Voluntary Pre-Elementary Program

Sectional Analysis

Section 1.

Defines pre-elementary program as one provided by a school district for students 3 through 4 years of age. Priority is given to low-income families to the extent that appropriations are insufficient to fund all programs.

Section 2.

Establishes age of eligibility (3-4 year olds).

Section 3.

Department of Education shall devise and implement a statewide early education plan that incorporates early learning guidelines adopted by the education board and coordinates with Head Start.

Section 4.

Defines pre-elementary program.

Section 5.

Board of education shall adopt early learning guidelines that support an effective and cost-efficient optional pre-elementary program provided under a statewide early childhood education plan approved by the department.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA
REPRESENTATIVE MARY NELSON
REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT KAWASAKI
REPRESENTATIVE BETH KERTTULA
REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG

HB 306: Alaska Voluntary Pre-Elementary Program

Sectional Analysis

Section 1.

Defines pre-elementary program as one provided by a school district for students 3 through 4 years of age. Priority is given to low-income families to the extent that appropriations are insufficient to fund all programs.

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Establishes age of eligibility (3-4 year olds).

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Department of Education shall devise and implement a statewide early education plan that incorporates early learning guidelines adopted by the education board and coordinates with Head Start.

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Section 5.

Board of education shall adopt early learning guidelines that support an effective and cost-efficient optional pre-elementary program provided under a statewide early childhood education plan approved by the department.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

JANUARY 4, 2006



REPORT NUMBER 06.026

THE VALUE OF PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

PREPARED FOR REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

BY ROGER WITHINGTON, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

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You asked for information on the value of prekindergarten programs. Specifically, you asked for a brief summary of current reports or studies that analyze the value of prekindergarten programs. In addition, you asked for a summary of Alaska's prekindergarten program that was discontinued in fiscal year 2003.

As you may know, prekindergarten programs (Pre-K) are generally defined as direct educational services to children who are not yet eligible for kindergarten. Usually, this refers to children ages 3 and 4, but occasionally may apply to younger children. Please keep in mind that there are a number of terms that are used interchangeably with prekindergarten including early education, preschool, early learning, school readiness, and child development. Although more than one-third of states provide state funding supplements to Head Start programs, these generally are not considered state-funded prekindergarten programs.

SUMMARY

According to the National Education Association (NEA), children who attend high quality prekindergarten programs are better prepared for kindergarten, have better language and math skills, better cognitive and social skills, and better relationships with classmates.¹ In addition, they note that children who attend prekindergarten are less likely to drop out of school, repeat grades, need special education, or get in trouble with the law when they are older. They also note that children with disadvantaged backgrounds, such as low-income or a single parent household, generally benefit more from quality prekindergarten programs than do children who are not disadvantaged. The NEA advocates for universal high quality prekindergarten programs because it "represents one of the best investments our country can make."

According to the Education Commission of the States (ECS), forty-three states currently fund early learning programs for young children, up from about ten states in 1980.² Generally, the goal of these programs is to promote school readiness so children have a better chance of future success, both in school and in life. The ECS notes that implementation of state-funded prekindergarten programs varies widely. As examples, some programs are half day, others full day; some programs are for only four-year-olds, others include three-year-olds, while others offer services to infants and toddlers; some prekindergarten programs are operated through local school districts, while others offer services through public and private centers. The ECS also notes that most states target programs for children with an identified risk factor such as poverty, low parental education, teen parents, and English as a second language. Some states and cities, however, are working towards making quality prekindergarten programs universally available.

¹ The National Education Association (NEA) works to advance the cause of public education in the United States. The NEA is the nation's largest professional employee organization, with 2.7 million members who work at every level of education, from pre-school to university graduate programs. The NEA has affiliate organizations in every state, as well as in more than 14,000 local communities across the United States. The NEA's URL is <http://www.nea.org/index.html>

² The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan interstate compact created in 1965 to improve public education by facilitating the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences among state policymakers and education leaders. The URL for the ECS is <http://www.ecs.org/>

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), Georgia and Oklahoma were the first states to expand preschool to all four-year-olds.³ Florida, Maryland, New York and West Virginia are in the process of phasing in their universal programs. The NCSL also notes that 36 states considered early education bills in 2005, and at least 28 states considered expanding preschool programs. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), approximately 738,000 children, or about 10 percent of all three- and four-year-olds in the nation, participate in state-funded prekindergarten programs.⁴ The NIEER estimates that state spending on prekindergarten programs totals \$2.54 billion.

We identified numerous reports or studies that articulate the benefits of high quality prekindergarten programs. We chose to summarize the following reports because they are generally more recent than others, often cited as a bellwether study or report, discuss a program that has been evaluated with some scientific rigor, or offer a thorough summary of the status of prekindergarten activities in the United States.

THE EFFECTS OF UNIVERSAL PRE-K ON COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

In 2005, the journal *Developmental Psychology* published the results of new research that confirms that Oklahoma's universal prekindergarten program helps four-year-olds prepare for school by improving their cognitive and language functioning. The children who participated in the state-funded universal prekindergarten program performed better on cognitive tests that measured pre-reading and reading skills, prewriting and spelling skills, and math reasoning and problem-solving skills, than those children who did not participate in the program. The research results also showed that the prekindergarten program improved performances for children from all races and income brackets (as measured by eligibility for a reduced-price lunch). According to the study, low-income children and Hispanic children benefited the most from the program.

Although the report provided very little information about the program, the researchers noted that Oklahoma's high prekindergarten teacher education requirements, and the state's willingness to compensate prekindergarten teachers at the same level as elementary and secondary school teachers in the public schools, distinguishes this program from others.

We include the report, entitled "The Effects of Universal Pre-K on Cognitive Development," as Attachment A.

³ The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), founded in 1975, is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, commonwealths, and territories. The NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on most state issues. The URL for the NCSL is <http://www.ncsl.org/index.htm#>

⁴ The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) supports early childhood education initiatives by providing objective, nonpartisan information based on research. The NIEER was established at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education with a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The URL for the NIEER is <http://nieer.org/>

*THE EFFECTS OF STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS ON YOUNG CHILDREN'S SCHOOL
READINESS IN FIVE STATES*

In 2004, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), examined a sample of more than 5,000 four-year-olds enrolled in high-quality, state-funded prekindergarten programs in the states of Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia. The Institute compared achievement scores of children who just completed the preschool program with the scores of a sample of children who did not participate in a program. The results of the examination found significant improvement in children's early language, literacy, and mathematical development, regardless of the child's racial or economic background.

Among other things, the study found that the children who attended state-funded prekindergarten programs showed gains in vocabulary scores about 31 percent greater than the gains of those children who did not participate in a program. The researchers note that these higher scores translate into an additional four months of progress in vocabulary growth. In mathematics, including basic number concepts and such tasks as simple addition and subtraction, telling time, and counting money, the children who participated in the state-funded preschool improved their math skills by 44 percent compared to children who did not participate in a program.

As we noted above, this study examined programs in five states—Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina and West Virginia. The programs in Michigan, New Jersey and South Carolina target at-risk children (usually low-income children), while the programs in Oklahoma and West Virginia are universal. Although each state program is unique, all required licensed teachers with four-year college degrees and certification in early childhood. These programs also maintain low teacher to child ratios (the highest ratio being one teacher to ten children), and low maximum class sizes (the highest being 20 students). Unfortunately the report did not provide any additional information regarding the studied programs.

We include "The Effects of State Prekindergarten Programs on Young Children's School Readiness in Five States" as Attachment B.

THE 2004 STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK

In 2004, the National Institute for Early Education Research produced the *2004 State Preschool Yearbook* that summarizes state-funded prekindergarten programs in the United States during the 2002-2003 school year. This document is parsed into three sections, the first of which provides background information on preschool education in the United States, a description of the methods used by the NIERR to collect and analyze the data, a national summary of NIEER's findings, and NIEER's national policy recommendations. The second section provides detailed profiles of each state's policies regarding preschool access, quality standards, and resources. The last section of the report includes tables that provide the complete survey data obtained from every state, Head Start and child care data. A few of the findings from the NIEER's study are as follows.

- ◆ In 2002-2003, 38 states funded one or more prekindergarten initiatives serving a total of nearly 740,000 children (this represents an increase of 45,000 students from the previous school year). Access was uneven across states, however, with 10 states accounting for over three-quarters of enrollment.

- ◆ State prekindergarten initiatives served more than six times as many four-year-olds as three-year-olds in 2002-2003. Twenty states enrolled at least 10 percent of their four-year-olds in state preschool programs, but only three states served at least 10 percent of their three-year-olds.
- ◆ Georgia and Oklahoma continued to be the only states that made prekindergarten universally available to children. Across the United States, only one out of ten children ages three and four were participating in state preschool programs, as most states targeted programs that only serve economically or otherwise disadvantaged children.
- ◆ In 2002-2003, twelve states did not have a state-funded prekindergarten program.
- ◆ States need to initiate or improve policies that establish stronger quality standards. Only one state, Arkansas, met all ten of NIEER's quality benchmarks, whereas 20 state initiatives met five or fewer benchmarks.⁵
- ◆ State policies regarding quality standards were inconsistent. For example, one state may emphasize comprehensive services while another stresses teacher qualifications.
- ◆ Only 13 state prekindergarten initiatives required teachers to have both a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early childhood education. In addition, only 13 programs required teachers to be paid on a public school salary scale.
- ◆ State funding for prekindergarten initiatives totaled \$2.54 billion in 2002-2003. Over three-fifths of this funding was from five states—California, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. Inadequate funding severely limited access and quality in most states.
- ◆ State spending per child enrolled in state-funded preschool ranged from less than \$1,000 in Maryland to more than \$8,700 in New Jersey. State spending per child averaged about \$3,500, less than half of the total funding provided per child in federal Head Start or public K-12 education.
- ◆ Between the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years, total state spending (adjusted for inflation) rose by \$90 million, or four percent. However, state funding per child enrolled decreased by \$90, and 21 states decreased total spending.

We include *The State of Preschool: 2004 State Preschool Yearbook* as Attachment C.

⁵ The NIEER uses a quality standards checklist of ten items to compare standards of quality across different state prekindergarten programs.

THE HIGH/SCOPE PERRY PRESCHOOL PROJECT

According to *Education Week*, "The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project is perhaps the best-known study of the long-term effects of a high-quality prekindergarten education." During the mid-1960s, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation selected and tracked a group of 123 African-Americans, age 3 or 4, who were born in poverty and at high risk of failing in school.⁶ The children were randomly divided into a program group who received a high-quality preschool program based on High/Scope's participatory learning approach, and a comparison group who received no preschool program. This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the long-term effect of quality prekindergarten on the lives of the participating students.

In their most recent evaluation of this group of students, the age of which was about 40, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation was able to interview 97 percent of the study participants still living. Some of this study's major findings are as follows.

- ◆ A greater percentage of the group who received high-quality early education graduated from high school than did the non-program group (65% vs. 45%). This proved to be particularly true for the female participants (84% vs. 32%).
- ◆ A smaller percentage of females who received high-quality early education required treatment for mental impairment than did the non-program females (8% vs. 36%).
- ◆ A smaller percentage of females who received high-quality early education had to repeat a grade than did the non-program females (21% vs. 41%).
- ◆ The group who received high-quality early education on average outperformed the non-program group on various intellectual and language tests during their early childhood years, on school achievement tests between ages 9 and 14, and on literacy tests at ages 19 and 27.
- ◆ A greater percentage of the group who received high-quality early education was employed at age 40 than was the non-program group (76% vs. 62%).
- ◆ The group who received high-quality early education had median annual earnings more than \$5,000 higher than the non-program group (\$20,800 vs. \$15,300).
- ◆ A greater percentage of the group who received high-quality early education owned their own homes (37% vs. 28%).
- ◆ A greater percentage of the group who received high-quality early education had a savings account than did the non-program group (76% vs. 50%).

⁶ The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is an independent nonprofit research, development, training and public advocacy organization. High/Scope's mission is "to lift lives through education." Among other things, the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation provides training to preschool and elementary teachers and administrators, conducts research on the effectiveness of educational programs, and develops curricula for infant, toddler, preschool, elementary, and adolescent programs. The URL for the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is <http://www.highscope.org/index.asp>.

- ◆ The group who received high-quality early education had significantly fewer arrests than did the non-program group (36% vs. 55% arrested five times or more).
- ◆ Significantly fewer members of the group who received high-quality early care than the non-program group were ever arrested for violent crimes (32% vs. 48%), property crimes (36% vs. 58%), or drug crimes (14% vs. 34%).

According to the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, in constant dollars adjusted to 2000, the economic return to society of the Perry Preschool program was \$258,888 per participant, on an investment of \$15,166 per participant, or a \$17.07 return for every dollar invested.

Researchers with the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation identified the following attributes that contribute to the success of their prekindergarten program.

- ◆ The teachers in the Perry Preschool program had bachelor's degrees and were certified to teach in elementary, early childhood, and special education. Teachers also received training, supervision, and assessments that support the Perry Preschool program educational model, and were paid 10 percent above the local public school district's standard pay scale.
- ◆ The Perry Preschool program had four teachers for 20 to 25 children.
- ◆ The Perry Preschool program was a two school year program, starting at age three.
- ◆ The Perry Preschool program consisted of daily classes (five days a week) of two-and-a-half hours or more.
- ◆ The teachers in the Perry Preschool program helped children plan, perform, and review their own work. The classroom was arranged and the day was scheduled to support children's self-initiated learning activities.
- ◆ Perry Preschool program teachers visited with families at home, at least once every two weeks.

We include *The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40. Summary, Conclusions, and Frequently Asked Questions* as Attachment D.⁷

Additional information on the High Scope Perry Preschool Project can be found at <http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm>

ABECEDARIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION PROJECT

The Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project began in the 1970s by the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.⁸ The Abecedarian Project scientifically studied the potential benefits of early childhood education for children from low-income families. Children who were selected to participate in the program received full-time, high-quality instruction in a childcare setting from infancy through age five. Each child had an individualized plan of educational activities. These activities focused on social, emotional, and cognitive areas of development, and gave particular emphasis to language development. The children's progress was monitored over time with follow-up studies conducted at ages 12, 15, and 21.

So far, the findings demonstrate that important, long-lasting benefits are associated with the high-quality early childhood program. A sample of the benefits experienced by the program participants gleaned from the young-adult assessment (age 21) are as follows.

- ◆ The children who received early childhood education in the Abecedarian program are projected to make roughly \$143,000 more over their lifetimes than those who did not take part in the program.
- ◆ The mothers of children who were enrolled in the program also expect earnings of about \$133,000 more over their lifetimes than the mothers of the children who did not take part in the program.
- ◆ School districts saved more than \$11,000 per child because participants are less likely to require special or remedial education.
- ◆ The children who received early childhood education in the Abecedarian project had higher cognitive test scores from the toddler years to age 21.
- ◆ Academic achievement in both reading and math was higher from the primary grades through young adulthood for the children who received early childhood education in the Abecedarian project.
- ◆ The children who participated in the program completed more years of education and were more likely to attend a four-year college.
- ◆ The mothers of the children who participated in the program achieved higher educational and employment status than did the mothers of the children who were not in the program. These results were especially pronounced for teen mothers.
- ◆ Taxpayers received four dollars in benefits for every dollar spent on high-quality early education programs.

⁸ FPG Child Development Institute is a multidisciplinary institute at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The institute's mission is to cultivate and share the knowledge necessary to enhance child development and family wellbeing. The institute, through grants and contracts, conducts research and provides outreach services. The URL for the FPG Child Development Institute is <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/index.cfm>

We include the FPG Child Development Institute's summary of the Abecedarian Project as Attachment E.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH A HIGH PUBLIC RETURN

In 2003, economists with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis calculated that the potential annual return from a focused, high-quality early childhood education program is as high as 16 percent.⁹ Most of the return benefits the economy as a whole because individuals who participate in high-quality early childhood education programs developed greater skills than they otherwise would have, which in turn contributes to the local economies (approximately 12% return). A smaller portion (approximately 4%) of the return benefits the children who received early childhood education in the form of higher wages later in life. The researchers used data from the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project to conduct their analysis.

In June 2005, as an expansion to their 2003 research, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis researchers proposed expanding the scope of early childhood education programming to meet the needs of all impoverished children ages five and younger, including newborns. In making this proposal, the researchers cited advances in brain research that indicate the most critical neurological development occurs between birth and age three.

In summary, the authors maintain that economic development schemes based on attracting specific companies or industries often waste taxpayer dollars, whereas investment in early childhood development yields high and dependable returns, in turn aiding long-term economic growth.

We include *Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return* as Attachment F.

EARLY EDUCATION IN THE STATES: A YEAR IN REVIEW—2004

In March 2005, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) produced, *Early Education in the States: A Year in Review—2004*, to provide detailed information about actions of state legislatures on early education issues. Among other things, this report contains a brief review of the research on early education, NCSL's comments on the role of state legislatures in early education, and a state-by-state summary of state bills, acts, executive orders, and proposals made in 2004 that pertain to early education.

In addition to summarizing many of the reports or studies we discussed above, the NCSL notes that incorporated into recent child development initiatives are three new components: enhancing

The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis is one of 12 regional Reserve Banks that, together with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., make up the Federal Reserve System—the United States' central bank. The URL for the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' early childhood education website is <http://minneapolisfed.org/research/studies/earlychild/>

the role of parents; promoting innovation at the local level; and establishing state-level planning councils.

The NCSL notes that generally, state legislators should approach early education from a number of different perspectives. In some cases, early education has been one part of a larger education reform effort. Lately, legislators have made connections between early education and a state's ability to meet requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. State legislators also view early education as part of the solution to reducing the achievement gap for children before they enter the early elementary grades. In addition, the positive results demonstrated in long-term economic research have prompted policymakers to consider early education as a long-term investment.

We include *Early Education in the States: A Year in Review—2004* as Attachment G.

OTHER INFORMATIVE SOURCES

During the course of our research, we identified additional sources of early childhood education information that you may find useful. We identify these sources and their website address in Table 1.

Table 1: Sources of Early Childhood Education information	
Organization	URL
Child Development Center, Wilder Foundation	www.wilder.org/programs.0.html
Education and Early Learning, Committee for Economic Development	www.ced.org/projects/educ.shtml
Education Commission of the States	www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/issue.asp?issueID=184
Foundation for Child Development	www.ffcd.org/
National Child Care Information Center Online Library	nccic.org/
National Education Association	www.nea.org/index.html
National Scientific Council on the Developing Child	www.developingchild.net/
The RAND Corporation	www.rand.org/pubs/online/education/index.html
Ready4K, Minnesota's School Readiness Program	www.ready4k.org/
Strategies for Children: Early Education for All Campaign	www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/eea_horne.htm
The Trust for Early Education	www.trustforearlyed.org/
U.S. Department of Education	www.ed.gov/teachers/how/early/edpicks.jhtml?src=qc

ALASKA'S TWO-YEAR KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

As you know, Chapter 50, SLA 2003 (House Bill 154) amended Alaska Statute 14.03.080(c) to restrict education foundation formula funding of four-year olds attending kindergarten. At the time, approximately 30 of the 53 school districts in Alaska offered some form of a two-year kindergarten program, allowing both four- and five-year olds to attend (some school districts allowed all four-year olds to attend while others did not). Chapter 50, SLA 2003 restricts foundation formula funding to four-year olds for whom there is a realistic expectation that the child will successfully progress through the kindergarten curriculum and advance to the first grade the following school year. According to the Department of Education and Early Development's (DEED) fiscal note attached to HB 154, this amendment resulted in a savings of approximately \$3.9 million.

Although the letter of intent Governor Murkowski included with HB 154 noted the \$3.9 million saving that would result from the enactment of HB 154, the saving does not appear to be the primary motivation for the bill. Eddy Jeans, Manager of the School Finance and Facilities Section of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, testified during a House Education committee meeting, as well as numerous other committee meetings that discussed HB 154, that the intent of this bill was to address the policy question of whether the legislature wanted to fund four-year-olds in the kindergarten-through-12th-grade program.¹⁰ He also pointed to an equity issue as not every school district in Alaska took advantage of the "loop-hole" in the law. According to Mr. Jeans, it would cost the state approximately \$60 to \$62 million annually to provide kindergarten for all four-year olds. Mr. Jeans noted that this estimate does not include any improvements to the capacity of districts' facilities, such as providing adequate classroom space.

Also during a House Education committee meeting, Kevin Sweeny, then Special Assistant to the Office of the Commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development, testified, "the commissioner [of DEED] would agree that education would be better if the legislature funded all four-year-olds. In some districts it has shown that bringing kids in at four years old has helped them progress."¹¹ He also noted that the fundamental issue represented by HB 154 is whether the policy makers want to fund a statewide two-year kindergarten program through the foundation formula.

¹⁰ Eddy Jeans, now the Director of School Finance with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, can be contacted at 907-465-2891

¹¹ In addition, in November 2001, the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development adopted a resolution calling for voluntary preschool for all three- and four-year-old children. The resolution also expresses support for the development of pilot preschool programs in communities with low achievement scores on state exams, high poverty, and lack of Head Start or other early development programs

ALASKA COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL PROJECT - ALASKA'S PRESCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM

During each of the last two state fiscal years, the DEED received federally earmarked money to help fund the Alaska Community Preschool Project. During FY2005, the DEED distributed \$800,000, through a competitive process, to seven school districts (serving eight communities), to offer high-quality preschool.¹² During FY2006, the program received \$496,000 and funded services in seven communities in six districts (Juneau, Hoonah, King Cove, Sand Point, Bethel, Unalakleet and Minto). Federal funding for FY2007 has not been determined.

The purpose of this project is to augment existing preschool programs, that often operate in partnership with other entities such as Head Start, to bring them up to the teaching standards prescribed by the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment—Basic education model. So far the project has served roughly 200 children.¹³

READY TO READ, READY TO LEARN TASK FORCE

In May 2005, Governor Murkowski called for the establishment of the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force. The governor charged this task force with identifying the following:

- ◆ Ways Alaskans can improve the readiness of preschoolers to read and learn,
- ◆ Ways families can become better at teaching children to listen, speak, read and write,
- ◆ Ways preschools and childcare centers can provide the best possible start for children,
- ◆ Ways the business community can participate in this effort, and
- ◆ Ways state and local governments can support the effort.

¹² In FY2005, the DEED received a total \$1.2 million, and spent the money not directed to district programs on training and materials. Paul S. Sugar, Education Specialist II with the Department of Education and Early Development, can be reached at 907-465-4862.

¹³ The International Center for the Enhancement of Learning Potential (ICELP), the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment—Basic program is directed toward the younger child, from approximately three to seven years of age, and the very low functioning older individual. The program is designed for use in a classroom group setting, for smaller groups of targeted learners, and as a one-to-one therapeutic intervention. The program also provides an "early intervention" to enable students who are developmentally at risk, or those individuals who have not acquired basic foundational knowledge and skills, to respond to direct stimuli and develop cognitive functions.

First Lady Nancy Murkowski is the Chair of Task Force while the Alaska Humanities Forum has the lead in establishing and administering the task force.¹⁴

According to the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Governor Murkowski will ask the Alaska Legislature to provide \$750,000 in fiscal year 2007 to improve childhood literacy and learning. This was announced by Nancy Murkowski at the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force held in Anchorage on November 10, 2005. The Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education and Early Development will use the funds to carry out recommendations currently being developed by the task force.

We include the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force's most recent newsletter "Task Force News" as Attachment H.

I hope you find this information to be useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or need additional information.

¹⁴ The Alaska Humanities Forum was founded in 1972 by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH); the Forum is one of 56 state and territorial groups also supported by the NEH. The Forum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to "use the wisdom and methods of the humanities to enrich the civic, intellectual and cultural life of all Alaskans." The Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force URL is <http://www.akhf.org/ReadytoRead/ECL-Summit.html>

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A

William T. Gormley, Jr., Ph.D., Ted Gayer, Ph.D., Deborah Phillips, Ph.D., and Brittany Dawson, M.A., "The Effects of Universal Pre-K on Cognitive Development," *Developmental Psychology*, American Psychological Association, Volume 41, No. 6,
<http://www.apa.org/journals/releases/dev416872.pdf>

Attachment B

W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D., Cynthia Lamy, Ed.D., Kwanghee Jung, Ph.D., "The Effects of State Prekindergarten Programs on Young Children's School Readiness in Five States," The National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University, December 2005

Attachment C

W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D., Jason T. Hustedt, Ph.D., Kenneth B. Robin, Psy.M., and Karen L. Schulman, M.P.P., *The State of Preschool: 2004 State Preschool Yearbook*, The National Institute for Early Education Research, 2004,
<http://nieer.org/yearbook/>

Attachment D

Lawrence J. Schweinhart, *The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40, Summary, Conclusions, and Frequently Asked Questions*, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, High/Scope Press, 2005,
<http://www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm>

Attachment E

"Early Learning, Later Success: The Abecedarian Study, Early Childhood Educational Intervention for Poor Children, Executive Summary," The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, FPG Child Development Inst., Chapel Hill, NC,
<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/summary.cfm>

Attachment F

Art Rolnick, Rob Grunewald, *Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return*, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, December 2003,
<http://minneapolisfed.org/research/studies/earlychild/abc-part2.pdf>

Attachment G

Steffanie Clothier, *Early Education in the States A Year in Review—2004*, The National Conference of State Legislatures, March 2005,
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf//prekreport.htm>

Attachment H

"Task Force News," Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 2005,
<http://www.akhf.org/ReadytoRead/R2Rnewsletter1.pdf>