



LAWS OF ALASKA

2018

Source

SCS CSHB 64(EDC)

Chapter No.

AN ACT

Relating to the establishment of the Legislative Task Force on Reading Proficiency and Dyslexia.

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

THE ACT FOLLOWS ON PAGE 1

AN ACT

1 Relating to the establishment of the Legislative Task Force on Reading Proficiency and
2 Dyslexia.

3 _____

4 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
5 to read:

6 **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.** The legislature finds that

7 (1) approximately 43,300 students in the state do not meet Alaska English
8 Language Arts standards as indicated by the Alaska Measures of Progress test, and reading
9 proficiency scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress for students in the
10 state were stagnant from 2003 through 2015;

11 (2) results of student assessments indicate that reading instruction and reading
12 proficiency for students in the state should be improved;

13 (3) dyslexia, the most common specific learning disability, affects between
14 three and 17 percent of the student population and accounts for approximately 80 percent of

- 1 all specific learning disabilities;
- 2 (4) the scientific consensus is that, when learning to read, typical and atypical
- 3 learners have overlapping instructional needs, including the need for highly knowledgeable
- 4 and skilled reading teachers to improve reading proficiency outcomes;
- 5 (5) parents and other caregivers are responsible for ensuring that their children
- 6 learn to read through the public school system or other means of instruction; and
- 7 (6) the residents of this state also hold the legislature, the governor, and the
- 8 state Board of Education and Early Development accountable for student reading proficiency
- 9 outcomes and for leading reforms of the state's public education system.

10 * **Sec. 2.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to

11 read:

12 **LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON READING PROFICIENCY AND DYSLEXIA.**

13 (a) The Legislative Task Force on Reading Proficiency and Dyslexia is established as a joint

14 task force of the Alaska State Legislature.

15 (b) The task force established under (a) of this section shall

16 (1) examine

17 (A) the effects of current state statutes and regulations on reading

18 proficiency outcomes;

19 (B) the effects of dyslexia on reading proficiency outcomes in the state

20 and in other jurisdictions;

21 (C) dyslexia education instructional practices and laws in other

22 jurisdictions;

23 (D) educational reforms related to reading that have been implemented

24 in the state and the reasons for the success or failure of those reforms at the local level;

25 (2) evaluate and make recommendations regarding

26 (A) reading instructional practices for all public school students in the

27 state;

28 (B) the diagnosis, treatment, and education of children affected by

29 dyslexia;

30 (C) methods to improve reading proficiency and reading instruction for

31 all public school students in the state;

1 (D) possible legislation or other policy recommendations to improve
2 reading proficiency outcomes;

3 (E) methods to mitigate the effects of dyslexia on reading proficiency,
4 including

5 (i) early screening, early identification, and early intervention
6 for students in preschool through grade three;

7 (ii) screening, identification, and intervention for students in
8 grades four through 12;

9 (iii) training all relevant educational staff in the use of
10 evidence-based screening and identification instruments; and

11 (3) identify evidence-based, multi-sensory, direct, explicit, structured, and
12 sequential approaches to instructing students affected by dyslexia.

13 (c) The task force shall, not later than March 29, 2019, submit a final report
14 summarizing the findings and recommendations of the task force to the governor, the state
15 Board of Education and Early Development, and the senate secretary and chief clerk of the
16 house of representatives and notify the legislature that the report is available.

17 (d) The task force consists of 12 members as follows:

18 (1) three members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of
19 the house of representatives, including at least one member of the minority organizational
20 caucus;

21 (2) three members of the senate appointed by the president of the senate,
22 including at least one member of the minority organizational caucus; and

23 (3) six members of the public to be appointed jointly by the speaker of the
24 house of representatives and the president of the senate as follows:

25 (A) one member who is an active or retired teacher in kindergarten
26 through grade three with significant experience teaching reading to students
27 developing typically and atypically in the state;

28 (B) one member representing the Association of Alaska School
29 Boards;

30 (C) one member representing either the Alaska Council of School
31 Administrators or the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals who is

1 knowledgeable about reading instruction and dyslexia;

2 (D) one member representing a nonprofit organization with a mission
3 related to reading and education;

4 (E) one member who is a parent of a child with a reading disability;
5 and

6 (F) one member who is a student enrolled in good standing in a public
7 high school in the state who demonstrates leadership and has an interest in promoting
8 reading proficiency.

9 (e) The speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate shall
10 jointly appoint the chair of the task force from among the legislative members of the task
11 force. A majority of the task force constitutes a quorum. The task force meets at the call of the
12 chair and may meet telephonically.

13 (f) A vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original
14 selection or appointment.

15 (g) The task force may request data and other information from the Department of
16 Education and Early Development, school districts, and other state agencies.

17 (h) The staff of the legislator who chairs the task force shall provide administrative
18 and other support to the task force.

19 (i) Members of the task force serve without compensation and are not entitled to per
20 diem or travel expenses.

21 (j) The task force expires on June 30, 2019.

22 (k) In this section,

23 (1) "dyslexia" means a learning disability that is neurobiological in origin and
24 is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling
25 and decoding abilities;

26 (2) "relevant educational staff" includes school psychologists, special
27 education teachers, other teachers, principals, and superintendents;

28 (3) "task force" means the Legislative Task Force on Reading Proficiency and
29 Dyslexia.