

SENATE BILL NO. 18

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR BEGICH

Introduced: 1/19/21

Referred: Prefiled

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act directing school districts to set maximum class sizes; and establishing a grant**
2 **program to support class size reduction in public elementary schools."**

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

4 * **Section 1.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

5 **Sec. 14.03.129. Class size and class size reduction grant program.** (a) Each
6 school district shall adopt a policy setting the maximum class size for each grade.

7 (b) The class size reduction grant program is established in the department.
8 Subject to appropriation, the department may award to a school district a grant to
9 provide funding for a five-year period to assist the school district in reducing class
10 sizes in elementary schools to achieve a student-to-teacher ratio of not greater than 10
11 to one.

12 (c) The department shall

13 (1) establish an application process for participation in the program;

14 (2) direct participating school districts to establish a policy to reduce

1 elementary school class size; and

2 (3) determine grant amounts; in awarding grants under this section, the
3 department shall give priority to school districts with the highest percentage of
4 elementary schools that receive federal financial assistance under 20 U.S.C. 6301 -
5 6339 and 20 U.S.C. 6571 - 6578.

6 (d) A school district that receives a grant under this section

7 (1) may use not more than three percent of grant funds for
8 administrative expenses related to the program; and

9 (2) shall, except as provided in (e) of this section, use at least 97
10 percent of grant funds to reduce class sizes in elementary schools to achieve a student-
11 to-teacher ratio of not greater than 10 to one, by recruiting, hiring, and training
12 elementary school teachers.

13 (e) If a school district that receives a grant under this section achieves a
14 student-to-teacher ratio of not greater than 10 to one in all elementary school classes,
15 the school district may use not more than 15 percent of grant funds for each of the
16 following purposes:

17 (1) to provide additional classroom space by obtaining new space or
18 renovating school buildings;

19 (2) to provide professional development for elementary school
20 teachers.

21 (f) For purposes of determining a student-to-teacher ratio under this section, a
22 paraprofessional is counted as one-half of a teacher.

23 (g) In this section,

24 (1) "elementary school" means a school consisting of grades
25 kindergarten through eight or a combination of grades within this range;

26 (2) "program" means the class size reduction grant program
27 established under this section;

28 (3) "teacher" means a person who holds a valid teacher certificate
29 under AS 14.20.