

**SENATE BILL NO. 42**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

**BY SENATOR HUGHES**

**Introduced: 1/19/21**  
**Referred: Prefiled**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 **"An Act relating to early education programs provided by school districts; relating to**  
2 **course credit for students; relating to annual reports regarding school district**  
3 **performance and school district employees; relating to school age eligibility; relating to**  
4 **funding for early education programs; establishing early education programs and a**  
5 **voluntary parent program; relating to the duties and powers of the Department of**  
6 **Education and Early Development; relating to school operating fund reserves; relating**  
7 **to certification of teachers; relating to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission;**  
8 **relating to a virtual education consortium; establishing a reading intervention program**  
9 **for public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through three; establishing a**  
10 **reading program in the Department of Education and Early Development; establishing**  
11 **a teacher retention working group; and providing for an effective date."**

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

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

3 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the Alaska Reading and Virtual Education  
4 Act.

5 \* **Sec. 2.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
6 read:

7 LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature that each school district  
8 consider adopting a policy to limit student-to-teaching-staff ratios for grades kindergarten  
9 through three.

10 \* **Sec. 3.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
11 read:

12 LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

13 (1) virtual education allows students to access courses that are not otherwise  
14 available in their local schools or school districts, including courses that are relevant to the  
15 interests and career paths of students;

16 (2) virtual education provides students with access to teachers who are experts  
17 in their fields, allowing for better instruction and better academic results;

18 (3) overall state spending on education does not correlate with improved  
19 academic results; however, spending on quality classroom instruction does correlate with  
20 improved academic results;

21 (4) access to quality classroom instruction, whether through virtual education  
22 or traditional delivery modes, is important for the success of every student in the state;

23 (5) despite the benefits of virtual education, virtual education has limitations  
24 and cannot replace high-quality teachers and teaching aides in the classroom who inspire  
25 high-quality student learning.

26 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 14.03.060(e) is amended to read:

27 (e) In addition to the grades enumerated in (a) of this section, an elementary  
28 school consists of **an early education** [A PRE-ELEMENTARY] program **approved**  
29 **or** supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8), **including a program**  
30 operated by **a head start agency** [THE DEPARTMENT] as a head start program  
31 under **42 U.S.C. 9831 - 9852c** [AS 14.38.010, OR LOCATED IN A PUBLIC

1 SCHOOL FOR FEDERAL FUNDING PURPOSES. EXCEPT FOR A CHILD WITH  
 2 A DISABILITY WHO IS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION OR RELATED  
 3 SERVICES UNDER AS 14.30.180 - 14.30.350, PRE-ELEMENTARY STUDENTS  
 4 MAY NOT BE COUNTED IN A SCHOOL'S AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP  
 5 UNDER AS 14.17].

6 \* **Sec. 5.** AS 14.03.072(a) is amended to read:

7 (a) Each school district shall annually provide to parents and guardians of  
 8 students enrolled in kindergarten through grade three in a public school in the state  
 9 current information on the importance of early reading [LITERACY], including

10 (1) intervention strategies and reading intervention services  
 11 provided under AS 14.30.765;

12 (2) home reading [LITERACY] plans;

13 (3) grade retention standards and policies for the elementary school  
 14 attended;

15 (4) strategies and resources to help children learn to read.

16 \* **Sec. 6.** AS 14.03.073(a) is amended to read:

17 (a) A school district shall provide the opportunity for students enrolled in  
 18 grades nine through 12 in the district to challenge one or more courses provided by the  
 19 district by demonstrating mastery in mathematics, language arts, science, social  
 20 studies, and world languages at the level of the course challenged. A school district  
 21 shall give full credit for a course to a student who successfully challenges that course  
 22 as provided under (b) of this section.

23 \* **Sec. 7.** AS 14.03.073(b) is amended to read:

24 (b) A school district shall establish, within a reasonable time, an assessment  
 25 tool and a standard for demonstrating mastery in courses provided for students in  
 26 grades nine through 12 by the district under (a) of this section. This section does not  
 27 require a school district to establish an assessment tool for every course in  
 28 mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, and world languages that is offered  
 29 to students in grades nine through 12 by the district.

30 \* **Sec. 8.** AS 14.03.073 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

31 (e) In addition to providing the opportunity for a student to challenge a course

1 under (a) - (c) of this section, a school district shall allow a student enrolled in grades  
 2 nine through 12 to receive course credit in career and technical education, physical  
 3 education, music, or art if the student participates in an activity, including a cultural  
 4 activity, outside of school hours that the school district determines meets the  
 5 educational or physical activity requirements of the course. A school district may  
 6 adopt standards for awarding course credit for an activity under this subsection.

7 \* **Sec. 9.** AS 14.03.078(a) is amended to read:

8 (a) The department shall provide to the legislature **and school districts** by  
 9 February 15 of each year by electronic means an annual report regarding the progress  
 10 of each school and school district toward high academic performance by all students.  
 11 The report required under this section must include

12 (1) information described under **AS 14.03.120** [AS 14.03.120(d)];

13 (2) progress of the department

14 (A) toward implementing the school accountability provisions  
 15 of AS 14.03.123; and

16 (B) in assisting high schools to become accredited;

17 (3) a description of the resources provided to each school and school  
 18 district for coordinated school improvement activities and staff training in each school  
 19 and school district;

20 (4) each school district's and each school's progress in aligning  
 21 curriculum with state education performance standards;

22 (5) a description of the efforts by the department to assist a public  
 23 school or district that receives a low performance designation under AS 14.03.123;

24 (6) a description of intervention efforts by each school district and  
 25 school for students who are not meeting state performance standards; [AND]

26 (7) the number and percentage of turnover in certificated personnel and  
 27 superintendents;

28 **(8) a summary of the categories of certificated administrative**  
 29 **employees employed by each school district that includes the ratio of**

30 **(A) the number of certificated administrative employees in**  
 31 **each category employed by each school district compared to the number**

1 of students enrolled in the school district on October 1 of the previous  
 2 year;

3 (B) the total number of certificated administrative  
 4 employees employed by each school district compared to the total number  
 5 of teachers employed by the school district on October 1 of the previous  
 6 year; and

7 (C) the total number of teachers employed by each school  
 8 district compared to the total number of students enrolled in the school  
 9 district on October 1 of the previous year;

10 (9) the progress made to implement the reading intervention  
 11 programs established under AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.775, including data on how  
 12 school districts are using in-service days for professional development in reading  
 13 instruction; and

14 (10) the effectiveness and participation rates of the parents as  
 15 teachers program established under AS 14.03.420, including measures of  
 16 efficiency and effectiveness that demonstrate the effects of the program on school  
 17 readiness.

18 \* **Sec. 10.** AS 14.03.078 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

19 (c) Each school district shall make available to the public the portion of the  
 20 report under (a)(8) of this section that pertains to the school district by posting the  
 21 information in a prominent location on the school district's or local community's  
 22 Internet website or by another easily accessible method.

23 (d) In this section, "administrative employee" means an employee who does  
 24 not provide direct classroom instruction for students as a regular part of the  
 25 employee's job.

26 \* **Sec. 11.** AS 14.03.080(d) is amended to read:

27 (d) A child who is five years of age on or before June 1 preceding  
 28 [SEPTEMBER 1 FOLLOWING] the beginning of the school year, and who is under  
 29 school age, may enter a public school kindergarten. A school district may waive the  
 30 requirements of this subsection for a child who achieves a passing score on an  
 31 assessment approved by the department.

1 \* **Sec. 12.** AS 14.03.080 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

2 (g) A child who is at least four, but not more than five, years of age on or  
3 before June 1 preceding the beginning of the school year and who has not attended a  
4 public school kindergarten may enter a public school early education program.

5 \* **Sec. 13.** AS 14.03.120 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

6 (h) To the extent allowable under state and federal privacy laws, each district  
7 shall annually report to the department information from the previous school year  
8 regarding

9 (1) the number of students and teaching staff assigned to each  
10 classroom in grades kindergarten through three;

11 (2) the number and percentage of students

12 (A) in grades kindergarten through three who demonstrated  
13 improvement on expected grade-level skills on the statewide screening or  
14 assessment tool;

15 (B) in grades kindergarten through three who performed below  
16 expected grade-level skills on the statewide screening or assessment tool, by  
17 grade;

18 (C) retained in grades kindergarten through three;

19 (D) in grade three who demonstrated sufficient reading skills  
20 for grade progression based on the statewide screening or assessment tool;

21 (E) in grade three who demonstrated sufficient reading skills  
22 for grade progression based on an alternative standardized reading screening or  
23 assessment;

24 (F) in grade three who demonstrated sufficient reading skills  
25 for grade progression based on a student reading portfolio;

26 (G) in grade three who progressed to grade four based on a  
27 good cause exemption under AS 14.30.765(g);

28 (3) the performance on the statewide screening or assessment tool of  
29 students in a grade above grade three who were retained in grade three under  
30 AS 14.30.765(e) or who progressed to grade four based on a good cause exemption  
31 under AS 14.30.765(g).

1 \* **Sec. 14.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding new sections to read:

2 **Article 4. Early Education.**

3 **Sec. 14.03.410. Early education programs; grants.** (a) The department shall  
4 provide training and assist districts in the development of early education programs,  
5 and shall approve early education programs that meet the standards adopted by the  
6 board under AS 14.07.165(a)(5). If the department determines that the district's early  
7 education program complies with the standards, the department shall approve the early  
8 education program. If the department determines that the district's early education  
9 program does not comply with the standards, the department shall provide assistance  
10 to the district to improve the early education program to meet the standards.

11 (b) The department may award a grant to an eligible district to provide  
12 funding for a three-year period for the development of a district-wide early education  
13 program. At the end of the three-year grant period, the department shall assess the  
14 district's early education program and determine whether the program complies with  
15 the standards adopted under AS 14.07.165(a)(5).

16 (c) The department shall rank the performance of all districts in the state in  
17 accordance with the accountability system and performance designations required  
18 under AS 14.03.123. The department shall divide all districts into six groups based on  
19 performance ranking. Each group of districts is eligible for a three-year grant in the  
20 following fiscal years:

21 (1) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, the lowest performing 10  
22 percent of districts;

23 (2) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, the second lowest  
24 performing 15 percent of districts;

25 (3) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, the third lowest  
26 performing 15 percent of districts;

27 (4) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, the third highest  
28 performing 20 percent of districts;

29 (5) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, the second highest  
30 performing 20 percent of districts;

31 (6) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, the highest performing

1 20 percent of districts.

2 (d) In each fiscal year, the department may award a three-year grant to a  
3 district that applies in a format prescribed by the department and that is in a group of  
4 districts that

5 (1) is eligible for a grant during that fiscal year under (c) of this  
6 section; or

7 (2) was eligible for a grant in a previous fiscal year under (c) of this  
8 section, but did not receive a grant under this section in a previous fiscal year.

9 (e) If the department does not approve a district's early education program at  
10 the end of the three-year grant period, the department may provide a one-year  
11 remediation grant to allow the district one additional fiscal year to meet the early  
12 education program standards adopted by the board under AS 14.07.165(a)(5). If the  
13 district is unable to meet the early education program standards at the end of the fiscal  
14 year, the department may, in the discretion of the commissioner, provide an additional  
15 remediation grant to allow the district not more than one additional fiscal year to meet  
16 the standards. Nothing in this section prohibits a district from using its own funds to  
17 continue the remediation process.

18 (f) A student in an early education program may not be counted in the district  
19 ADM under AS 14.17.500 or 14.17.905 until after the department determines that the  
20 early education program complies with the standards adopted by the board under  
21 AS 14.07.165(a)(5) and approves the program. The department may not approve an  
22 early education program developed with a grant awarded under (b) of this section until  
23 the end of the three-year grant period under (b) of this section or the additional  
24 remediation period under (e) of this section. The department may approve a district's  
25 early education program that does not receive a grant under this section at any time if  
26 the early education program complies with the standards adopted by the board under  
27 AS 14.07.165(a)(5).

28 (g) A grant under this section is subject to appropriation, but may not supplant  
29 other early education funding available to districts.

30 (h) In this section,

31 (1) "ADM" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990;



1 (2) "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990;

2 (3) "early education program" means a program for children who are  
3 four and five years of age and who have not attended a public school kindergarten if  
4 the program's primary function is educational.

5 **Sec. 14.03.420. Parents as teachers program.** (a) The department shall devise  
6 and implement a statewide parents as teachers program for the benefit of children who  
7 are under five years of age. The program must provide a system of early childhood  
8 education that

9 (1) is evidence-based;

10 (2) involves parents;

11 (3) is consistent with available research and best practices for high  
12 quality early childhood education;

13 (4) incorporates guidelines adopted by the department for early  
14 learning that

15 (A) enhances school readiness;

16 (B) increases parent understanding of child development and  
17 developmental milestones;

18 (C) reduces the incidence of child abuse and neglect;

19 (D) increases identification of health problems and  
20 developmental delays through regular screenings;

21 (E) improves child health indicators, including immunization  
22 rates;

23 (F) increases parental involvement; and

24 (5) provides for effective and efficient coordination with or expansion  
25 of pre-elementary education programs operating in the state, to the extent permitted by  
26 law.

27 (b) A school district shall, to the extent space is needed and available, provide  
28 for the use of a room in a school at no charge to support the program established under  
29 this section.

30 (c) The department shall develop and enter into local partnerships to  
31 implement the program established under this section.

1 \* **Sec. 15.** AS 14.07.020(a) is amended to read:

2 (a) The department shall

3 (1) exercise general supervision over the public schools of the state  
4 except the University of Alaska;

5 (2) study the conditions and needs of the public schools of the state,  
6 adopt or recommend plans, administer and evaluate grants to improve school  
7 performance awarded under AS 14.03.125, and adopt regulations for the improvement  
8 of the public schools; the department may consult with the University of Alaska to  
9 develop secondary education requirements to improve student achievement in college  
10 preparatory courses;

11 (3) provide advisory and consultative services to all public school  
12 governing bodies and personnel;

13 (4) prescribe by regulation a minimum course of study for the public  
14 schools; the regulations must provide that, if a course in American Sign Language is  
15 given, the course shall be given credit as a course in a foreign language;

16 (5) establish, in coordination with the Department of Health and Social  
17 Services, a program for the continuing education of children who are held in detention  
18 facilities in the state during the period of detention;

19 (6) accredit those public schools that meet accreditation standards  
20 prescribed by regulation by the department; these regulations shall be adopted by the  
21 department and presented to the legislature during the first 10 days of any regular  
22 session, and become effective 45 days after presentation or at the end of the session,  
23 whichever is earlier, unless disapproved by a resolution concurred in by a majority of  
24 the members of each house;

25 (7) prescribe by regulation, after consultation with the state fire  
26 marshal and the state sanitarian, standards that will ensure healthful and safe  
27 conditions in the public and private schools of the state, including a requirement of  
28 physical examinations and immunizations in pre-elementary schools; the standards for  
29 private schools may not be more stringent than those for public schools;

30 (8) exercise general supervision over early education programs  
31 [PRE-ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS] that receive direct state or federal funding,

1 **including early education programs provided by a school district for students**  
 2 **four and five years of age, and approve early education programs provided by a**  
 3 **school district that meet the standards adopted by the board under**  
 4 **AS 14.07.165(a)(5);**

5 (9) exercise general supervision over elementary and secondary  
 6 correspondence study programs offered by municipal school districts or regional  
 7 educational attendance areas; the department may also offer and make available to any  
 8 Alaskan through a centralized office a correspondence study program;

9 (10) accredit private schools that request accreditation and that meet  
 10 accreditation standards prescribed by regulation by the department; nothing in this  
 11 paragraph authorizes the department to require religious or other private schools to be  
 12 licensed;

13 (11) review plans for construction of new public elementary and  
 14 secondary schools and for additions to and major rehabilitation of existing public  
 15 elementary and secondary schools and, in accordance with regulations adopted by the  
 16 department, determine and approve the extent of eligibility for state aid of a school  
 17 construction or major maintenance project; for the purposes of this paragraph, "plans"  
 18 include educational specifications, schematic designs, projected energy consumption  
 19 and costs, and final contract documents;

20 (12) provide educational opportunities in the areas of vocational  
 21 education and training, and basic education to individuals over 16 years of age who  
 22 are no longer attending school; the department may consult with businesses and labor  
 23 unions to develop a program to prepare students for apprenticeships or internships that  
 24 will lead to employment opportunities;

25 (13) administer the grants awarded under AS 14.11;

26 (14) establish, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety, a  
 27 school bus driver training course;

28 (15) require the reporting of information relating to school disciplinary  
 29 and safety programs under AS 14.33.120 and of incidents of disruptive or violent  
 30 behavior;

31 (16) establish by regulation criteria, based on low student performance,

1 under which the department may intervene in a school district to improve instructional  
2 practices, as described in AS 14.07.030(a)(14) or (15); the regulations must include

3 (A) a notice provision that alerts the district to the deficiencies  
4 and the instructional practice changes proposed by the department;

5 (B) an end date for departmental intervention, as described in  
6 AS 14.07.030(a)(14)(A) and (B) and (15), after the district demonstrates three  
7 consecutive years of improvement consisting of not less than two percent  
8 increases in student proficiency on standards-based assessments in language  
9 arts and mathematics, as provided in AS 14.03.123(f)(1)(A); and

10 (C) a process for districts to petition the department for  
11 continuing or discontinuing the department's intervention;

12 (17) notify the legislative committees having jurisdiction over  
13 education before intervening in a school district under AS 14.07.030(a)(14) or  
14 redirecting public school funding under AS 14.07.030(a)(15);

15 **(18) establish a reading program to provide direct support for and**  
16 **intervention in the reading intervention programs of participating schools as**  
17 **described in AS 14.30.765 and 14.30.770.**

18 \* **Sec. 16.** AS 14.07.020(c) is amended to read:

19 (c) In this section, **"early education program"** ["PRE-ELEMENTARY  
20 SCHOOL"] means a **program** [SCHOOL] for children ages three through five years if  
21 the **program's** [SCHOOL'S] primary function is educational.

22 \* **Sec. 17.** AS 14.07.050 is amended to read:

23 **Sec. 14.07.050. Selection of textbooks.** Textbooks for use in the public  
24 schools of the state, including a district offered statewide correspondence study  
25 program, shall be selected by district boards for district schools. Nothing in this  
26 section precludes

27 **(1)** a correspondence study student, or the parent or guardian of a  
28 correspondence study student, from privately obtaining or using textbooks or  
29 curriculum material not provided by the school district;

30 **(2) the department from selecting and purchasing supplementary**  
31 **reading textbooks and materials for school districts in connection with reading**

1 **intervention services provided under AS 14.30.765 and 14.30.770.**

2 \* **Sec. 18.** AS 14.07.165(a) is amended to read:

3 (a) The board shall adopt

4 (1) statewide goals and require each governing body to adopt written  
5 goals that are consistent with local needs;

6 (2) regulations regarding the application for and award of grants under  
7 AS 14.03.125;

8 (3) regulations implementing provisions of AS 14.11.014(b);

9 (4) regulations requiring approval by the board before a charter school,  
10 state boarding school, or a public school may provide domiciliary services;

11 (5) **regulations establishing standards for an early education**  
12 **program provided by a school district for children who are four and five years of**  
13 **age; the regulations must include**

14 (A) **standards for a**

15 (i) **half-day program consisting of not less than two**  
16 **and one-half hours;**

17 (ii) **full-day program consisting of six hours; and**

18 (iii) **locally designed, evidence-based program that is**  
19 **less than half a day that meets early education program standards;**

20 (B) **a requirement that a teacher in charge of a program**  
21 **hold a valid teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20 and**

22 (i) **have satisfactorily completed a minimum of six**  
23 **credit hours in early childhood education or complete the**  
24 **minimum credit hours within one year of the date the teacher's**  
25 **employment with the early education program begins; or**

26 (ii) **have two or more years of experience teaching**  
27 **kindergarten or another early education program and have**  
28 **completed additional coursework related to reading instruction, as**  
29 **required by the department;**

30 (C) **developmentally appropriate objectives for children**  
31 **four and five years of age rather than academic standards appropriate for**

1 older children; the objectives must allow school districts to adapt the  
 2 content of an early education program to be culturally appropriate to  
 3 local communities; and

4 (D) accommodations for the needs of all early education  
 5 children and their families regardless of socioeconomic circumstances  
 6 [REPEALED].

7 \* **Sec. 19.** AS 14.17.500 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

8 (d) Except as provided in AS 14.17.905(d), a student in an early education  
 9 program provided by a school district and approved by the department under  
 10 AS 14.07.020(a)(8) is counted as one-half of a full-time equivalent student.

11 \* **Sec. 20.** AS 14.17.505(a) is amended to read:

12 (a) A district may not accumulate in a fiscal year an unreserved portion of its  
 13 year-end fund balance in its school operating fund, as defined by department  
 14 regulations, that is greater than 25 [10] percent of its expenditures for that fiscal year,  
 15 except that, during the first three fiscal years after a cooperative arrangement  
 16 grant is awarded under AS 14.14.115, a district may accumulate an additional  
 17 unreserved portion that is equal to the amount of savings resulting from the  
 18 grant.

19 \* **Sec. 21.** AS 14.17.905(a) is amended to read:

20 (a) For purposes of this chapter, the determination of the number of schools in  
 21 a district is subject to the following:

22 (1) a community with an ADM of at least 10, but not more than 100,  
 23 shall be counted as one school;

24 (2) a community with an ADM of at least 101, but not more than 425,  
 25 shall be counted as

26 (A) one elementary school, which includes those students in  
 27 grades kindergarten through six, and, except as provided in (d) of this  
 28 section, in an early education program provided by a school district and  
 29 approved by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8); and

30 (B) one secondary school, which includes students in grades  
 31 seven through 12;

1 (3) in a community with an ADM of greater than 425, each facility that  
 2 is administered as a separate school shall be counted as one school, except that each  
 3 alternative school with an ADM of less than 175 shall be counted as a part of the  
 4 school in the district with the highest ADM.

5 \* **Sec. 22.** AS 14.17.905 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

6 (d) A school district may not include in the average daily membership of a  
 7 school students who are four and five years of age if the students are enrolled in an  
 8 early education program that receives state or federal funding other than funding under  
 9 this chapter.

10 \* **Sec. 23.** AS 14.20.010 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

11 (b) A public school shall display in a prominent location the name of each  
 12 teacher who teaches at that school who has achieved national board certification.

13 (c) It is the goal of the legislature that by the year 2026 at least four percent of  
 14 public school teachers in the state will have achieved national board certification.

15 (d) In this section, "national board certification" means certification by the  
 16 National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

17 \* **Sec. 24.** AS 14.20.015(c) is amended to read:

18 (c) The preliminary teacher certificate issued under this section must contain  
 19 the same endorsements as those on the current valid teacher certificate issued by the  
 20 other state. **However, a teacher holding a preliminary teacher certificate issued**  
 21 **under this section must complete three credits or the equivalent of coursework,**  
 22 **training, or testing requirements in evidence-based reading instruction approved**  
 23 **by the board to be eligible for an endorsement in elementary education issued by**  
 24 **the department. A teacher may apply coursework, training, or testing**  
 25 **requirements completed under this subsection toward continuing education**  
 26 **requirements established by the board in regulation.**

27 \* **Sec. 25.** AS 14.20.020(i) is amended to read:

28 (i) Beginning on July 1, 1998, a person is not eligible for an initial regular  
 29 teacher certificate unless the person has taken and successfully completed a  
 30 competency examination or examinations designated, at the time the person took the  
 31 test, by the board. The board shall review nationally recognized examinations that are

1 designed to test the competency of new teachers and shall designate those  
 2 examinations that it finds adequately test the skills and abilities of new teachers. For  
 3 each examination designated under this subsection, the board shall establish the  
 4 minimum acceptable level of performance. If the board designates a Praxis test as a  
 5 competency examination under this subsection, the board shall periodically  
 6 adjust the minimum acceptable level of performance established for the Praxis  
 7 test so that the level is equal to or higher than the most stringent minimum  
 8 acceptable level of performance for teacher certification established by another  
 9 state. A regulation adopted under this subsection to increase the minimum  
 10 acceptable level of performance on a competency examination may not take effect  
 11 earlier than one year after the board adopts the regulation.

12 \* **Sec. 26.** AS 14.20.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

13 (l) A teacher certificated under this section must complete three credits or the  
 14 equivalent of coursework, training, or testing requirements in evidence-based reading  
 15 instruction approved by the board in regulation to be eligible for an endorsement in  
 16 elementary education issued by the department. A teacher may apply coursework,  
 17 training, or testing requirements completed under this subsection toward continuing  
 18 education requirements established by the board in regulation.

19 \* **Sec. 27.** AS 14.20.380 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

20 (b) The department shall provide administrative support services to the  
 21 commission.

22 \* **Sec. 28.** AS 14.20.460 is amended to read:

23 **Sec. 14.20.460. Duties of commission.** The commission shall

24 (1) establish procedures [,] and adopt regulations to implement the  
 25 purposes of AS 14.20.370 - 14.20.510;

26 (2) conduct investigations and hearings on alleged violations of ethical  
 27 or professional teaching performance, contractual obligations, and professional  
 28 teaching misconduct;

29 (3) review the regulations of the department as they relate to teacher  
 30 certification and recommend necessary changes;

31 (4) review the decisions of the department regarding the issuance or



1 denial of certificates and, in the [ITS] discretion of the commission, recommend  
2 reversal of decisions;

3 (5) reduce the commission's administrative costs by using  
4 administrative support services provided by the department.

5 \* **Sec. 29.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding new sections to read:

6 **Article 15. Reading Intervention Programs.**

7 **Sec. 14.30.760. Statewide assessment.** (a) To implement the district reading  
8 intervention services established under AS 14.30.765, the department shall

9 (1) adopt a statewide screening or assessment tool to administer to  
10 students in grades kindergarten through three to identify students with reading  
11 deficiencies, including students with characteristics of dyslexia; the screening or  
12 assessment tool must evaluate

13 (A) phonemic awareness, letter naming fluency, letter sound  
14 fluency, and letter word sound fluency of students in kindergarten;

15 (B) letter word sound fluency and oral reading fluency of  
16 students in grade one;

17 (C) vocabulary and oral reading fluency of students in grades  
18 two and three;

19 (2) support teachers of grades kindergarten through three by

20 (A) administering the statewide screening or assessment tool  
21 three times each school year, once in the fall, once in the winter, and once in  
22 the spring, to all students in grades kindergarten through three, with the  
23 exception of students who demonstrate sufficient reading skills on the first  
24 screening or assessment of the school year;

25 (B) providing methods to monitor student progress;

26 (C) providing targeted instruction based on student needs as  
27 determined by the results of the screening or assessment tool; and

28 (D) providing additional assistance as determined by the  
29 department;

30 (3) provide training to school district staff related to using the results  
31 of the statewide screening or assessment tool and understanding evidence-based

1 reading interventions, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic  
2 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;

3 (4) establish a process that allows the commissioner to waive, upon  
4 request, use of the statewide screening or assessment tool required under this  
5 subsection by a school district if the school district has adopted an evidence-based  
6 reading screening or assessment tool and the screening or assessment tool is approved  
7 by the department;

8 (5) review and approve alternative standardized reading screenings or  
9 assessments for use by school districts.

10 (b) In adopting a statewide screening or assessment tool under (a)(1) of this  
11 section, the department shall consider the following factors:

12 (1) the amount of time needed to administer the screening or  
13 assessment, with the intention of minimizing effects on instructional time;

14 (2) the time frame for reporting screening or assessment results to  
15 teachers, administrators, and parents or guardians;

16 (3) the integration of the screening or assessment with student  
17 instruction and department support; and

18 (4) recommendations from a task force, working group, or committee  
19 created by law and charged with studying issues related to reading proficiency and  
20 reading deficiencies.

21 **Sec. 14.30.765. District reading intervention services.** (a) Each school  
22 district shall offer intensive reading intervention services to students in grades  
23 kindergarten through three who exhibit a reading deficiency to assist students in  
24 achieving reading proficiency at or above grade level by the end of grade three. The  
25 district shall provide the intensive reading intervention services in addition to the core  
26 reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education classroom.  
27 The intensive reading intervention services must

28 (1) be provided by a district reading teacher to all students in grades  
29 kindergarten through three who are determined to have a reading deficiency based on  
30 the statewide screening or assessment tool adopted under AS 14.30.760(a)(1);

31 (2) provide explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness,

1 phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as necessary;

2 (3) use evidence-based reading intervention methods that have shown  
3 proven results in accelerating student reading achievement within a single school year;

4 (4) include instruction with detailed explanations, extensive  
5 opportunities for guided practice, and opportunities for error correction and feedback;

6 (5) incorporate daily targeted small group reading instruction based on  
7 student needs, either in person or online;

8 (6) monitor the reading progress of each student's reading skills  
9 throughout the school year and adjust instruction according to student needs;

10 (7) be implemented during regular school hours through any available  
11 method, including in person or through online delivery by teachers or specialty  
12 reading coaches;

13 (8) be implemented outside of regular school hours, as directed in the  
14 student's individual reading improvement plan under (b) of this section, for a student  
15 who scores at the lowest achievement level on the statewide screening or assessment  
16 tool; and

17 (9) be reviewed based on a department-approved response to  
18 intervention or multi-tiered system support models, addressing additional support and  
19 services needed to remedy identified needs.

20 (b) In addition to the reading intervention services provided under (a) of this  
21 section, a school district shall provide an individual reading improvement plan for  
22 each student in grades kindergarten through three who is determined to have a reading  
23 deficiency based on the statewide screening or assessment tool. An individual reading  
24 improvement plan developed under this section must

25 (1) be implemented not later than 30 days after identification of the  
26 reading deficiency;

27 (2) be created by the student's reading teacher in consultation with the  
28 school principal, the student's parents or guardians, and other pertinent district staff;

29 (3) describe the evidence-based reading intervention services the  
30 student will receive to achieve and demonstrate sufficient reading skills;

31 (4) provide reading intervention services outside of regular school

1 hours for a student who scores at the lowest achievement level on the statewide  
2 screening or assessment tool consistent with (a)(8) of this section; and

3 (5) include a process for monitoring progress and adjusting the plan  
4 based on student needs.

5 (c) If at any time during the school year a student in grades kindergarten  
6 through three demonstrates a reading deficiency, the district or school shall notify the  
7 student's parents or guardians in writing or during a conference. The district or school  
8 shall provide the student's parents or guardians with updates on the student's progress  
9 every two weeks after the initial notification. The initial notification must

10 (1) be provided to the student's parents or guardians not later than 15  
11 days after identification of the reading deficiency;

12 (2) state that the district identified the student as having a reading  
13 deficiency and that a reading improvement plan will be developed under (b) of this  
14 section;

15 (3) describe current services that the district is providing to the student;

16 (4) describe the proposed evidence-based reading intervention and  
17 supplemental instructional services and supports that the district will provide to the  
18 student to improve the identified area of reading deficiency;

19 (5) explain that the district or school will inform the parents or  
20 guardians in writing of the student's progress toward grade level reading at least every  
21 two weeks;

22 (6) identify strategies for the parents or guardians to use at home to  
23 help the student succeed in reading;

24 (7) explain that if the student has a reading deficiency at the end of the  
25 school year, unless the student receives an exemption under (g) of this section or has  
26 previously been retained in kindergarten, grade one, grade two, or grade three, the  
27 student may be prevented from progressing to the next grade level under (d) of this  
28 section; and

29 (8) explain that a student in grade three should demonstrate sufficient  
30 reading skills to progress to grade four under (e) of this section, unless the student  
31 receives an exemption under (g) of this section or has previously been retained in

1 kindergarten, grade one, grade two, or grade three.

2 (d) If, not later than 45 days before the end of the school year, a teacher  
3 determines that a student in grades kindergarten through three has a reading  
4 deficiency, the student's teacher and other pertinent district staff shall provide written  
5 notification to and meet with the student's parents or guardians to determine whether  
6 the student will be able to maintain adequate academic progress at the next grade level  
7 and discuss delayed grade level progression as an intervention strategy. School staff  
8 shall work with the parents or guardians to schedule a date, time, and place for the  
9 meeting and, if no parent or guardian attends the meeting, the teacher and school staff  
10 shall determine grade level progression.

11 (e) A student in grade three should demonstrate sufficient reading skills to  
12 progress to grade four. A student demonstrates sufficient reading skills for progression  
13 by

14 (1) scoring at a proficient or higher achievement level on the statewide  
15 screening or assessment tool or on the statewide summative assessment;

16 (2) achieving an acceptable score on an alternative standardized  
17 reading screening or assessment as determined and approved by the department; or

18 (3) demonstrating mastery of reading standards through a student  
19 reading portfolio based on criteria established by the department.

20 (f) The department shall develop a program to provide incentives to districts,  
21 schools, school staff, and students for increases in the percentage of students in grade  
22 three who demonstrate sufficient reading skills under (e) of this section.

23 (g) A school board may exempt a student from delayed grade level  
24 progression for good cause. A good cause exemption is limited to

25 (1) a student with a disability whose individualized education plan  
26 under AS 14.30.278 exempts the student from participation in the statewide screening  
27 or assessment tool;

28 (2) a student with a disability who participates in the statewide  
29 screening or assessment tool and has an individualized education plan under  
30 AS 14.30.278 or a plan under 29 U.S.C. 794 that reflects that the student has received  
31 intensive reading intervention services for two years or more but still demonstrates a

1 reading deficiency;

2 (3) a student who has received intensive reading intervention services  
3 for two or more years but still demonstrates a reading deficiency; or

4 (4) a student whose primary language is other than English and who  
5 has had less than two years of instruction in an English language learning program.

6 (h) A student's parents or guardians may request that the student receive a  
7 good cause exemption under (g) of this section by submitting documentation to the  
8 principal of the school in which the student is enrolled showing that an exemption is  
9 appropriate. If the principal determines that the student meets one of the exemptions  
10 under (g) of this section, the principal shall recommend to the school board in writing  
11 that the school board grant the student a good cause exemption. The school board shall  
12 accept or reject the principal's recommendation in writing and provide notice of its  
13 decision to the student's parents or guardians and the principal.

14 (i) If a student in grade three does not demonstrate sufficient reading skills for  
15 progression to grade four under (e) of this section, the district or school in which the  
16 student is enrolled shall provide written notification to the student's parents or  
17 guardians not later than 45 days before the end of the school year. The written  
18 notification must

19 (1) state that the student did not demonstrate sufficient reading skills to  
20 progress to grade four;

21 (2) explain the implementation of intervention or progression  
22 strategies;

23 (3) describe the current services being provided to the student; and

24 (4) if the student's parents or guardians requested a good cause  
25 exemption under (g) of this section and the school board rejected the request, include a  
26 statement that the request for a good cause exemption was rejected and a copy of the  
27 written notification the school board provided to the parents or guardians under (h) of  
28 this section.

29 (j) For a student who does not progress to the next grade level under (d) or (e)  
30 of this section, or who progresses to the next grade level with a good cause exemption  
31 under (g) of this section, the district in which the student is enrolled shall

1 (1) review the student's individual reading improvement plan;  
 2 (2) provide intensive reading intervention services to improve the  
 3 student's identified area of reading deficiency using effective instructional strategies to  
 4 accelerate student progress;

5 (3) provide additional services and support to improve the student's  
 6 identified area of reading deficiency, including

7 (A) a transitional instructional setting that is designed to  
 8 produce learning gains;

9 (B) supplemental tutoring offered by a person with specialized  
 10 reading training;

11 (C) an increase in time dedicated to the reading instruction  
 12 methods described in (a)(3) - (5) of this section, including more extensive  
 13 opportunities for guided practice and error correction and feedback;

14 (4) develop a plan for reading at home outlined in an agreement with  
 15 the parents or guardians, including parent participation in training workshops and  
 16 regular parent-guided home reading activities.

17 (k) A district or school may not retain a student under this section who was  
 18 previously retained in kindergarten, grade one, grade two, or grade three.

19 (l) In this section,

20 (1) "evidence-based reading intervention" means an intervention based  
 21 on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence that has a demonstrated record of success  
 22 in adequately increasing a student's reading competency in the areas of phonemic  
 23 awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills,  
 24 and reading comprehension;

25 (2) "reading teacher" means a teacher who has demonstrated an  
 26 effectiveness at instructing students to read at or above grade level through student  
 27 reading performance data and teacher performance evaluations and who meets the  
 28 requirements established by the state Board of Education and Early Development in  
 29 regulation.

30 **Sec. 14.30.770. Department reading program.** (a) The department shall  
 31 establish a reading program to provide direct support for and intervention in intensive

1 reading intervention services in the lowest performing 10 percent of schools as  
2 determined under AS 14.03.123, selecting not more than 10 participating schools at a  
3 time. State funding provided to participating schools for implementation of the reading  
4 program is in addition to the amount of funding provided under AS 14.17. In  
5 conducting the program, the department shall

6 (1) use the accountability system established in AS 14.03.123 to  
7 identify low performing schools;

8 (2) establish an application process for school districts to apply to  
9 participate in the program;

10 (3) select low performing schools from the schools that apply to  
11 participate in the program;

12 (4) employ and assign a reading specialist for each school selected to  
13 direct the implementation of the intensive reading intervention services established  
14 under AS 14.30.765 by

15 (A) modeling effective instructional strategies for teachers by  
16 working regularly with students as a class, in small groups, or individually;

17 (B) coaching and mentoring teachers and staff in reading  
18 instruction with an emphasis on prioritizing time in a manner that has the  
19 greatest positive effects on student achievement;

20 (C) training teachers in data analysis and using data to  
21 differentiate instruction;

22 (D) leading and supporting reading leadership teams; and

23 (E) reporting on school and student performance to the  
24 department;

25 (5) establish a reporting process for each reading specialist and support  
26 reading specialist to submit updates to the department on implementation of the  
27 program;

28 (6) work with reading specialists to create specific improvement goals  
29 for each school selected, including measures of interim progress;

30 (7) select and purchase additional reading material for each school  
31 selected to supplement the intensive reading intervention services;



1 (8) pay travel and associated costs for a reading specialist or support  
2 reading specialist to attend relevant training sessions identified by or hosted by the  
3 department;

4 (9) periodically review staff development programs for their  
5 effectiveness in developing reading skills and, after consultation with school districts  
6 and experts, recommend to the board for approval staff development programs that

7 (A) have been proven to assess and accelerate student progress  
8 toward reaching reading competency;

9 (B) provide explicit and systematic skill development in the  
10 areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and  
11 comprehension;

12 (C) are evidence-based and reliable;

13 (D) provide initial and ongoing analysis of student progress  
14 toward reaching reading competency; and

15 (E) include texts on core academic content to assist students in  
16 maintaining or meeting grade-appropriate proficiency in academic subjects in  
17 addition to reading;

18 (10) annually convene, either in person or electronically, a panel made  
19 up of teachers of grades kindergarten through three, school administrators, and parents  
20 of students in grades kindergarten through three to review and provide commentary on  
21 the effectiveness of the reading intervention programs established under AS 14.30.760  
22 - 14.30.775.

23 (b) The department may employ and assign a support reading specialist for  
24 each school selected to participate in the program, as necessary, to support the reading  
25 specialist assigned under (a)(4) of this section or serve as a reading specialist for a  
26 school's early education program.

27 (c) A school selected to participate in the reading program established under  
28 this section shall

29 (1) ensure that a reading specialist assigned to the school is not  
30 required to perform functions that divert from the duties the department has assigned  
31 to the reading specialist;

1 (2) coordinate with the reading specialist or specialists to redesign the  
2 school's daily schedule to dedicate time to reading program activities, including  
3 intensive reading intervention services identified in a written agreement between the  
4 school and the department;

5 (3) present on the reading program established under this section and  
6 the intensive reading intervention services established under AS 14.30.765 at a public  
7 meeting; the presentation must include

8 (A) the data the department used to identify the school as  
9 eligible for the reading program;

10 (B) a detailed overview of the reading program and intensive  
11 reading intervention services;

12 (C) a timeline for implementing the intensive reading  
13 intervention services and meeting reading improvement goals; and

14 (D) the implications of the program for students, families, and  
15 educators;

16 (4) provide notice of the public meeting required under (3) of this  
17 subsection to the parents or guardians of each student at least seven days before the  
18 date of the meeting;

19 (5) present an annual update on the school's implementation of the  
20 reading program and intensive reading intervention services at a public meeting with  
21 notice provided to the parents or guardians of each student at least seven days before  
22 the date of the meeting;

23 (6) create partnerships between the school, the families of students,  
24 and the community that focus on promoting reading and increasing the amount of time  
25 that students spend reading.

26 (d) The department shall publish on the department's Internet website and  
27 make available to the public

28 (1) a completed application from each school selected to participate in  
29 the reading program;

30 (2) the reading program and intensive reading intervention services  
31 implemented by each school selected to participate; and

1 (3) a data analysis conducted by an independent contractor of the  
2 success of the reading program and intensive reading intervention services.

3 (e) The department may employ a person as a reading specialist or support  
4 reading specialist under this section if the person

5 (1) holds a valid teacher certificate issued under AS 14.20;

6 (2) has completed an approved graduate program for the preparation of  
7 reading specialists at an approved institution of higher education and

8 (A) has completed a supervised practicum or internship as a  
9 reading specialist; or

10 (B) has at least three years of full-time, demonstrated  
11 classroom teaching experience where reading instruction was a primary  
12 responsibility;

13 (3) is knowledgeable about and demonstrates competency in reading  
14 instruction, including

15 (A) an understanding of the five components of reading  
16 instruction identified by the National Reading Panel;

17 (B) knowledge of and experience in implementing effective  
18 reading instruction strategies and intervention methods;

19 (C) experience in designing and implementing a school-wide  
20 response to intervention program or multi-tiered system support model;

21 (D) an understanding of and experience in reading screenings  
22 or assessments and data analyses that inform instruction;

23 (E) knowledge of dyslexia and other learning disorders that  
24 affect reading achievement;

25 (F) knowledge of and an ability to effectively articulate the  
26 methods, issues, and resources involved in support of student instruction to a  
27 wide variety of audiences, including staff, parents, and students whose primary  
28 language is other than English; and

29 (4) meets other reading instruction coursework requirements  
30 established by the department in regulation.

31 **Sec. 14.30.775. Definition.** In AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.775, "district" has the

1 meaning given in AS 14.17.990.

2 \* **Sec. 30.** AS 14.30.765(c), enacted by sec. 29 of this Act, is amended to read:

3 (c) If at any time during the school year a student in grades kindergarten  
4 through three demonstrates a reading deficiency, the district or school shall notify the  
5 student's parents or guardians in writing or during a conference. The district or school  
6 shall provide the student's parents or guardians with updates on the student's progress  
7 every two weeks after the initial notification. The initial notification must

8 (1) be provided to the student's parents or guardians not later than 15  
9 days after identification of the reading deficiency;

10 (2) state that the district identified the student as having a reading  
11 deficiency and that a reading improvement plan will be developed under (b) of this  
12 section;

13 (3) describe current services that the district is providing to the student;

14 (4) describe the proposed evidence-based reading intervention and  
15 supplemental instructional services and supports that the district will provide to the  
16 student to improve the identified area of reading deficiency;

17 (5) explain that the district or school will inform the parents or  
18 guardians in writing of the student's progress toward grade level reading at least every  
19 two weeks;

20 (6) identify strategies for the parents or guardians to use at home to  
21 help the student succeed in reading;

22 (7) explain that if the student has a reading deficiency at the end of the  
23 school year, unless the student receives an exemption under (g) of this section or has  
24 previously been retained in kindergarten, grade one, grade two, or grade three, the  
25 student may be prevented from progressing to the next grade level under (d) of this  
26 section; and

27 (8) explain that a student in grade three **must** [SHOULD] demonstrate  
28 sufficient reading skills to progress to grade four under (e) of this section, unless the  
29 student receives an exemption under (g) of this section or has previously been retained  
30 in kindergarten, grade one, grade two, or grade three.

31 \* **Sec. 31.** AS 14.30.765(e), enacted by sec. 29 of this Act, is amended to read:

1 (e) A student in grade three **must** [SHOULD] demonstrate sufficient reading  
 2 skills to progress to grade four. A student demonstrates sufficient reading skills for  
 3 progression by

4 (1) scoring at a proficient or higher achievement level on the statewide  
 5 screening or assessment tool or on the statewide summative assessment;

6 (2) achieving an acceptable score on an alternative standardized  
 7 reading screening or assessment as determined and approved by the department; or

8 (3) demonstrating mastery of reading standards through a student  
 9 reading portfolio based on criteria established by the department.

10 \* **Sec. 32.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding a new section to read:

11 **Article 16. Virtual Education.**

12 **Sec. 14.30.800. Virtual education consortium.** (a) The department shall, in  
 13 cooperation with school districts, establish a virtual education consortium for the  
 14 purpose of making virtual education and professional development resources available  
 15 to students and teachers in the state. The consortium shall create and maintain a  
 16 database of virtual education courses for students in grades six through 12, training in  
 17 virtual instruction for teachers of students in grades six through 12, and professional  
 18 development courses for teachers of students in any grade. A school district or a third-  
 19 party vendor may provide a course for students or teachers that is included in the  
 20 database. A virtual education course for students may be included in the database only  
 21 if the course is approved by the department under (b) of this section.

22 (b) The department shall review the curriculum of a virtual education course  
 23 for students before including the course in the database. The department may approve  
 24 the course if the course is appropriate for students in grades six through 12 and aligned  
 25 with state standards established by the department. The database must be accessible to  
 26 all school districts and include the following information for each course:

27 (1) the title, the subject, and a description of the course;

28 (2) the name of the school district or third-party vendor that provides  
 29 the course;

30 (3) a description of the method of instruction for the course, including  
 31 whether the instruction is synchronous, asynchronous, or blended; and

1 (4) samples of the curriculum and instruction provided in the course,  
2 including an introductory video by the instructor and, for a synchronous course, a  
3 video of the instructor teaching.

4 (c) The consortium shall provide training for teachers of students in grades six  
5 through 12 on virtual instruction methods and the differences between virtual  
6 instruction and instruction offered in a classroom. A teacher may not provide  
7 instruction through a course for students that is in the database unless

8 (1) the teacher has completed the training provided by the consortium;  
9 or

10 (2) the consortium determines that the teacher's previous experience  
11 has prepared the teacher to provide virtual instruction and the teacher demonstrates the  
12 skills necessary to provide virtual instruction.

13 (d) In addition to providing training for teachers under (c) of this section, the  
14 consortium shall offer through the database professional development courses for  
15 teachers of students in any grade and shall include in the database professional  
16 development courses provided by third-party vendors. A school district with adequate  
17 broadband Internet access to participate in virtual professional development courses  
18 shall require that teachers in the school district complete professional development  
19 training through the consortium. The consortium may require, as a condition of  
20 participation, that school districts participating in virtual professional development  
21 courses for teachers adopt the same in-service days.

22 (e) A school district that provides a course included in the database may  
23 charge a fee to the school district in which a student who takes the course is enrolled.  
24 The fee may approximate the estimated cost to the school district of providing the  
25 course but may not exceed the amount calculated by multiplying the base student  
26 allocation by a fraction, the numerator of which is the number of classes the student  
27 takes during the school year that are provided by that school district and the  
28 denominator of which is the total number of classes the student takes during the school  
29 year that are provided by any school district.

30 (f) A school district that participates in the consortium shall pay a fee to the  
31 consortium. The department shall establish the fee in regulations, based on a

1 recommendation made by the consortium, and may adjust the fee annually as  
 2 necessary. The fees must approximately equal the consortium's administrative costs  
 3 related to reviewing and approving courses and maintaining the database.

4 (g) The consortium may require, as a condition of participation, that school  
 5 districts that provide courses or have students participating in courses included in the  
 6 database under (b) of this section adopt the same school term and class schedule for all  
 7 or part of a school day. The school term must meet the requirements of AS 14.03.030.

8 (h) In this section,

9 (1) "asynchronous" means instruction that does not require the  
 10 simultaneous participation of a student and instructor;

11 (2) "base student allocation" means the amount set out in  
 12 AS 14.17.470;

13 (3) "blended" means instruction that uses a combination of  
 14 asynchronous and synchronous delivery;

15 (4) "synchronous" means instruction that requires the simultaneous  
 16 participation of a student and instructor; synchronous instruction is delivered in real  
 17 time through videoconferencing or other live means;

18 (5) "virtual education" or "virtual instruction" means instruction  
 19 delivered through telecommunications or another digital or electronic method.

20 \* **Sec. 33.** AS 47.17.290(12) is amended to read:

21 (12) "organization" means a group or entity that provides care and  
 22 supervision for compensation to a child not related to the caregiver, and includes a  
 23 child care facility, pre-elementary school, early education program, head start  
 24 center, child foster home, residential child care facility, recreation program, children's  
 25 camp, and children's club;

26 \* **Sec. 34.** AS 14.30.765(f) is repealed July 1, 2025.

27 \* **Sec. 35.** AS 14.20.010(c) is repealed July 1, 2027.

28 \* **Sec. 36.** AS 14.03.410 is repealed July 1, 2032.

29 \* **Sec. 37.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
 30 read:

31 TEACHER RETENTION WORKING GROUP. (a) A teacher retention working

1 group is established to review issues and make findings related to challenges with teacher  
 2 retention at public schools in the state and make recommendations for improvement in teacher  
 3 retention. Members of the working group serve without compensation.

4 (b) The teacher retention working group consists of the following members:

5 (1) the commissioner of education and early development or the  
 6 commissioner's designee;

7 (2) two superintendents who are members of the Alaska Council of School  
 8 Administrators, one from an urban area and one from a rural area;

9 (3) two teachers who are members of the National Education Association -  
 10 Alaska, one from an urban area and one from a rural area;

11 (4) two members of the Association of Alaska School Boards, one from an  
 12 urban area and one from a rural area;

13 (5) the chairs of the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education;  
 14 and

15 (6) two members of the state Board of Education and Early Development, one  
 16 from an urban area and one from a rural area.

17 (c) The teacher retention working group shall select a chair from among its  
 18 membership.

19 (d) The teacher retention working group shall meet periodically and prepare a report  
 20 of its findings and recommendations. The working group shall submit the report to the  
 21 governor and to the senate secretary and chief clerk of the house of representatives for  
 22 distribution to all legislators on or before January 15, 2022, and shall notify the legislature  
 23 that the report is available. The working group expires January 16, 2022.

24 \* **Sec. 38.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
 25 read:

26 VIRTUAL EDUCATION AVAILABILITY DEADLINE. The Department of  
 27 Education and Early Development shall make available virtual education courses and  
 28 professional development resources under sec. 32 of this Act on or before July 1, 2021.

29 \* **Sec. 39.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
 30 read:

31 APPLICABILITY. Section 26 of this Act applies to endorsements in elementary



1 education issued on or after the effective date of sec. 26 of this Act. An endorsement in  
2 elementary education issued before the effective date of sec. 26 of this Act may not be  
3 renewed on or after the effective date of sec. 26 of this Act unless the teacher has completed  
4 three credits or the equivalent of coursework, training, or testing requirements under sec. 26  
5 of this Act.

6 \* **Sec. 40.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
7 read:

8 TRANSITION. To determine the lowest performing 10 percent of districts for  
9 purposes of grant eligibility under sec. 14 of this Act, in fiscal year 2022, the Department of  
10 Education and Early Development shall use school accountability rankings from the 2019 -  
11 2020 school year.

12 \* **Sec. 41.** Sections 20, 25, 27, 28, 32, and 38 of this Act take effect immediately under  
13 AS 01.10.070(c).

14 \* **Sec. 42.** Sections 30 and 31 of this Act take effect July 1, 2025.

15 \* **Sec. 43.** Except as provided in secs. 41 and 42 of this Act, this Act takes effect July 1,  
16 2021.