

CS FOR SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 6(EDC)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Offered: 2/17/20

Referred: Finance

Sponsor(s): SENATORS BEGICH, Kawasaki, Stevens, Olson, Kiehl, Gray-Jackson, Giessel

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to early education programs provided by school districts; relating to**
2 **school age eligibility; relating to funding for early education programs; establishing**
3 **early education programs and a voluntary parent program; relating to the duties of the**
4 **Department of Education and Early Development; relating to certification of teachers;**
5 **establishing a reading intervention program for public school students enrolled in**
6 **grades kindergarten through three; establishing a reading program in the Department**
7 **of Education and Early Development; establishing a teacher retention working group;**
8 **and providing for an effective date."**

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

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

12 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the Alaska Reads Act.

1 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.060(e) is amended to read:

2 (e) In addition to the grades enumerated in (a) of this section, an elementary
3 school consists of **an early education** [A PRE-ELEMENTARY] program **approved**
4 **or** supervised by the department under AS 14.07.020(a)(8), **including a program**
5 operated by **a head start agency** [THE DEPARTMENT] as a head start program
6 under **42 U.S.C. 9831 - 9852c** [AS 14.38.010, OR LOCATED IN A PUBLIC
7 SCHOOL FOR FEDERAL FUNDING PURPOSES. EXCEPT FOR A CHILD WITH
8 A DISABILITY WHO IS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION OR RELATED
9 SERVICES UNDER AS 14.30.180 - 14.30.350, PRE-ELEMENTARY STUDENTS
10 MAY NOT BE COUNTED IN A SCHOOL'S AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP
11 UNDER AS 14.17].

12 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.03.072(a) is amended to read:

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

16 (1) intervention strategies **and reading intervention services**
17 **provided under AS 14.30.765;**

18 (2) home **reading** [LITERACY] plans;

19 (3) grade retention standards and policies for the elementary school
20 attended;

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

22 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.03.078(a) is amended to read:

23 (a) The department shall provide to the legislature by February 15 of each year
24 by electronic means an annual report regarding the progress of each school and school
25 district toward high academic performance by all students. The report required under
26 this section must include

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

28 (2) progress of the department

29 (A) toward implementing the school accountability provisions
30 of AS 14.03.123; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* **Sec. 5.** AS 14.03.080(d) is amended to read:

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

* **Sec. 6.** AS 14.03.080 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

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

* **Sec. 7.** AS 14.03.120 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(h) To the extent allowable under state and federal privacy laws, each district

1 shall annually report to the department information from the previous school year
2 regarding

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

5 (2) the number and percentage of students

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

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

12 (C) retained in grades kindergarten through three;

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

15 (E) in grade three who demonstrated sufficient reading skills
16 for grade progression based on an alternative standardized reading screening or
17 assessment;

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

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

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

26 * **Sec. 8.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding new sections to read:

27 **Article 4. Early Education.**

28 **Sec. 14.03.410. Early education programs; grants.** (a) The department shall
29 provide training and assist districts in the development of early education programs,
30 and shall approve early education programs that meet the standards adopted by the
31 board under AS 14.07.165(a)(5). If the department determines that the district's early

1 education program complies with the standards, the department shall approve the early
 2 education program. If the department determines that the district's early education
 3 program does not comply with the standards, the department shall provide assistance
 4 to the district to improve the early education program to meet the standards.

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

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

15 (1) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, the lowest performing 10
 16 percent of districts;

17 (2) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, the second lowest
 18 performing 15 percent of districts;

19 (3) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, the third lowest
 20 performing 15 percent of districts;

21 (4) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, the third highest
 22 performing 20 percent of districts;

23 (5) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, the second highest
 24 performing 20 percent of districts;

25 (6) for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, the highest performing
 26 20 percent of districts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (h) In this section,

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

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

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

30 **Sec. 14.03.420. Parents as teachers program.** (a) The department shall devise
31 and implement a statewide parents as teachers program for the benefit of children who

are under five years of age. The program must provide a system of early childhood education that

- (1) is evidence-based;
- (2) involves parents;
- (3) is consistent with available research and best practices for high quality early childhood education;
- (4) incorporates guidelines adopted by the department for early learning that

- (A) enhances school readiness;
- (B) increases parent understanding of child development and developmental milestones;
- (C) reduces the incidence of child abuse and neglect;
- (D) increases identification of health problems and developmental delays through regular screenings;
- (E) improves child health indicators, including immunization rates;
- (F) increases parental involvement; and
- (5) provides for effective and efficient coordination with or expansion of pre-elementary education programs operating in the state, to the extent permitted by law.

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

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

* **Sec. 9.** AS 14.07.020(a) is amended to read:

- (a) The department shall
 - (1) exercise general supervision over the public schools of the state except the University of Alaska;
 - (2) study the conditions and needs of the public schools of the state, adopt or recommend plans, administer and evaluate grants to improve school

1 performance awarded under AS 14.03.125, and adopt regulations for the improvement
 2 of the public schools; the department may consult with the University of Alaska to
 3 develop secondary education requirements to improve student achievement in college
 4 preparatory courses;

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

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

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

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

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

24 (8) exercise general supervision over early education programs
 25 [PRE-ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS] that receive direct state or federal funding,
 26 including early education programs provided by a school district for students
 27 four and five years of age, and approve early education programs provided by a
 28 school district that meet the standards adopted by the board under
 29 AS 14.07.165(a)(5);

30 (9) exercise general supervision over elementary and secondary
 31 correspondence study programs offered by municipal school districts or regional

1 educational attendance areas; the department may also offer and make available to any
2 Alaskan through a centralized office a correspondence study program;

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 (16) establish by regulation criteria, based on low student performance,
26 under which the department may intervene in a school district to improve instructional
27 practices, as described in AS 14.07.030(a)(14) or (15); the regulations must include

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

30 (B) an end date for departmental intervention, as described in
31 AS 14.07.030(a)(14)(A) and (B) and (15), after the district demonstrates three

consecutive years of improvement consisting of not less than two percent increases in student proficiency on standards-based assessments in language arts and mathematics, as provided in AS 14.03.123(f)(1)(A); and

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

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

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

* Sec. 10. AS 14.07.020(c) is amended to read:

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

* Sec. 11. AS 14.07.050 is amended to read:

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

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

(2) the department from selecting and purchasing supplementary reading textbooks and materials for school districts in connection with reading intervention services provided under AS 14.30.765 and 14.30.770.

* Sec. 12. AS 14.07.165(a) is amended to read:

(a) The board shall adopt

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

(2) regulations regarding the application for and award of grants under

AS 14.03.125;

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

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

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

(A) standards for a

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

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

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

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

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

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

(C) developmentally appropriate objectives for children four and five years of age rather than academic standards appropriate for older children; the objectives must allow school districts to adapt the content of an early education program to be culturally appropriate to local communities; and

(D) accommodations for the needs of all early education children and their families regardless of socioeconomic circumstances

[REPEALED].

1 * **Sec. 13.** AS 14.17.500 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

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

5 * **Sec. 14.** AS 14.17.905(a) is amended to read:

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 * **Sec. 15.** AS 14.17.905 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

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

27 * **Sec. 16.** AS 14.20.015(c) is amended to read:

28 (c) The preliminary teacher certificate issued under this section must contain
29 the same endorsements as those on the current valid teacher certificate issued by the
30 other state. However, a teacher holding a preliminary teacher certificate issued
31 under this section must complete three credits or the equivalent of coursework,

training, or testing requirements in evidence-based reading instruction approved by the board to be eligible for an endorsement in elementary education issued by the department. A teacher may apply coursework, training, or testing requirements completed under this subsection toward continuing education requirements established by the board in regulation.

* **Sec. 17.** AS 14.20.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

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

* **Sec. 18.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding new sections to read:

Article 15. Reading Intervention Programs.

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

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

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

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

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

(2) support teachers of grades kindergarten through three by

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

1 screening or assessment of the school year;

2 (B) providing methods to monitor student progress;

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

5 (D) providing additional assistance as determined by the
6 department;

7 (3) provide training to school district staff related to using the results
8 of the statewide screening or assessment tool and understanding evidence-based
9 reading interventions, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic
10 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 **Sec. 14.30.765. District reading intervention services.** (a) Each school
30 district shall offer intensive reading intervention services to students in grades
31 kindergarten through three who exhibit a reading deficiency to assist students in

1 achieving reading proficiency at or above grade level by the end of grade three. The
2 district shall provide the intensive reading intervention services in addition to the core
3 reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education classroom.
4 The intensive reading intervention services must

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

8 (2) provide explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness,
9 phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as necessary;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 improvement plan developed under this section must

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

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

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

8 (4) provide reading intervention services outside of regular school
9 hours for a student who scores at the lowest achievement level on the statewide
10 screening or assessment tool consistent with (a)(8) of this section; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(g) A school board may exempt a student from delayed grade level

1 progression for good cause. A good cause exemption is limited to

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

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

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

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

14 (h) A student's parents or guardians may request that the student receive a
15 good cause exemption under (g) of this section by submitting documentation to the
16 principal of the school in which the student is enrolled showing that an exemption is
17 appropriate. If the principal determines that the student meets one of the exemptions
18 under (g) of this section, the principal shall recommend to the school board in writing
19 that the school board grant the student a good cause exemption. The school board shall
20 accept or reject the principal's recommendation in writing and provide notice of its
21 decision to the student's parents or guardians and the principal.

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

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

29 (2) explain the implementation of intervention or progression
30 strategies;

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

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

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

(1) review the student's individual reading improvement plan;

(2) provide intensive reading intervention services to improve the area of reading deficiency using effective instructional strategies to accelerate student progress;

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

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

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

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

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

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

(l) In this section,

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

1 and reading comprehension;

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

7 **Sec. 14.30.770. Department reading program.** (a) The department shall
8 establish a reading program to provide direct support for and intervention in intensive
9 reading intervention services in the lowest performing 10 percent of schools as
10 determined under AS 14.03.123, selecting not more than 10 participating schools at a
11 time. State funding provided to participating schools for implementation of the reading
12 program is in addition to the amount of funding provided under AS 14.17. In
13 conducting the program, the department shall

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (C) training teachers in data analysis and using data to
29 differentiate instruction;

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

31 (E) reporting on school and student performance to the

department;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(C) are evidence-based and reliable;

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

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

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

(b) The department may employ and assign a support reading specialist for

1 each school selected to participate in the program, as necessary, to support the reading
 2 specialist assigned under (a)(4) of this section or serve as a reading specialist for a
 3 school's early education program.

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

6 (1) ensure that a reading specialist assigned to the school is not
 7 required to perform functions that divert from the duties the department has assigned
 8 to the reading specialist;

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

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

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

18 (B) a detailed overview of the reading program and intensive
 19 reading intervention services;

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

22 (D) the implications of the program for students, families, and
 23 educators;

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

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

31 (6) create partnerships between the school, the families of students,

1 and the community that focus on promoting reading and increasing the amount of time
2 that students spend reading.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 (A) has completed a supervised practicum or internship as a
17 reading specialist; or

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

21 (3) is knowledgeable about and demonstrates competency in reading
22 instruction, including

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

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

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

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

31 (E) knowledge of dyslexia and other learning disorders that

1 affect reading achievement;

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

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

8 **Sec. 14.30.775. Definition.** In AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.775, "district" has the
9 meaning given in AS 14.17.990.

10 * **Sec. 19.** AS 47.17.290(12) is amended to read:

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

16 * **Sec. 20.** AS 14.03.410 is repealed July 1, 2031.

17 * **Sec. 21.** The uncoded law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
18 read:

19 TEACHER RETENTION WORKING GROUP. (a) A teacher retention working
20 group is established to review issues and make findings related to challenges with teacher
21 retention at public schools in the state and make recommendations for improvement in teacher
22 retention. Members of the working group serve without compensation.

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

24 (1) the commissioner of education and early development or the
25 commissioner's designee;

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

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

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

1 (5) the chairs of the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education;
2 and

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

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

7 (d) The teacher retention working group shall meet periodically and prepare a report
8 of its findings and recommendations. The working group shall submit the report to the
9 governor and to the senate secretary and chief clerk of the house of representatives for
10 distribution to all legislators on or before January 15, 2021, and shall notify the legislature
11 that the report is available. The working group expires January 16, 2021.

12 * **Sec. 22.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
13 read:

14 APPLICABILITY. Section 17 of this Act applies to endorsements in elementary
15 education issued on or after the effective date of this Act. An endorsement in elementary
16 education issued before the effective date of this Act may not be renewed on or after the
17 effective date of this Act unless the teacher has completed three credits or the equivalent of
18 coursework, training, or testing requirements under sec. 17 of this Act.

19 * **Sec. 23.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
20 read:

21 TRANSITION. To determine the lowest performing 10 percent of districts for
22 purposes of grant eligibility under sec. 8 of this Act, in fiscal year 2021, the Department of
23 Education and Early Development shall use school accountability rankings from the 2018 -
24 2019 school year.

25 * **Sec. 24.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2020.