

**STATE OF ALASKA  
THE LEGISLATURE**

**2018**

**Source**  
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**Legislative  
Resolve No.**  
21



Proclaiming March 2, 2019, as Alaska Reads Day.

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**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

**WHEREAS** the ability of citizens to read is recognized as a basic requirement for the viability of a democratic society; and

**WHEREAS** an educated public is essential to the development of the state's economy because a skilled and diverse workforce spurs economic activity and attracts revenue to the state; and

**WHEREAS** well-read citizens and successful students aid our country in successfully conducting foreign affairs, maintaining military and diplomatic roles, and maintaining national security; and

**WHEREAS** the state has chronically low proficiency rates for its students, and, according to several national measures, the state's proficiency rate was stagnant at 27 percent from 2005 to 2013, and only 30 percent of the state's fourth grade students were proficient readers in 2016; and

**WHEREAS** the National Center for Education Statistics revealed that, in 2015, Alaska was second to last in fourth grade reading proficiency, which means that the state's

fourth graders, and our students in general, are at a greater academic disadvantage than students in most other states; and

**WHEREAS** students who do not read proficiently by the third grade are likely to fall behind in all other subjects, which makes the development of reading proficiency before the third grade vital to academic success overall; and

**WHEREAS** students who are not proficient readers in the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school and to generate increased social services and incarceration costs for the state; and

**WHEREAS** reading proficiency begins at birth, and greater exposure to words in the home is directly related to better readers and better students; and

**WHEREAS** reading out loud to children increases their interest in mastering reading, exposes children to proper vocabulary, grammar, and phrasing, and enhances the development of their own reading skills; and

**WHEREAS** it is important that state policy leaders, business and community leaders, educators, parents, and all citizens of the state increase the emphasis they place on education and the fundamental skill of reading; and

**WHEREAS** private and public organizations and agencies, as well as private citizens and public officials, can participate in showing the state's students that their academic success and reading ability are important to the economy, stability, and prosperity of the state; and

**WHEREAS** participants from public and private sectors can participate in reading to children in public schools, private schools, libraries, and other appropriate community facilities; and

**WHEREAS** a campaign to make the public aware of the importance of mastering the fundamental skill of reading can be implemented through private and public partnerships and does not need public funding at this time; and

**WHEREAS** an Alaska Reads Day would foster a love of reading and encourage the young people of the state and all citizens of the state to explore the world of books, and would raise awareness of the importance of reading in our young children; and

**WHEREAS** Theodor Seuss Geisel, whose pen name was Dr. Seuss, inspired a love of reading and phonics in countless young persons of this country; and

**WHEREAS** March 2, 2016, was proclaimed Read Across America Day to coincide

with Dr. Seuss's birthday;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature proclaims March 2, 2019, as Alaska Reads Day; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests that public and private citizens and organizations of the state work together on March 2, 2019, to raise awareness among the students and citizens of the state of the importance of reading to young children and the importance of independent reading.