

AMENDMENT# |

BY SENATORS
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OFFERED IN THE SENATE
TO: SCS HB 114(FIN)

1 Page 1, line 1, following "Act":

2 Insert "relating to the powers and duties of the Department of Education and
3 Early Development; relating to public schools and school districts; relating to early
4 education programs; relating to funding for early education programs; relating to
5 school age eligibility; relating to reports by the Department of Education and Early
6 Development; relating to reports by school districts; relating to certification and
7 competency of teachers; relating to screening reading deficiencies and providing reading
8 intervention services to public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through
9 three; relating to textbooks and materials for reading intervention services; establishing
10 a reading program in the Department of Education and Early Development; relating to
11 the definition of 'parent' in education statutes; relating to a virtual education
12 consortium;"

13

14 Page 1, following line 4:

15 Insert new bill sections to read:

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

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

19 * Sec. 2. AS 14.03.040 is amended to read:

20 Sec. 14.03.040. Day in session. Each day within the school term is a day in
21 session except Saturdays, Sundays, and days designated as holidays by or according to
22 AS 14.03.050. A school board may approve Saturdays as a day in session. The day in
23 session in every school shall be at least four hours long, exclusive of intermissions, for

1 regulation. A teacher may apply coursework, training, or testing requirements
 2 completed under this subsection toward continuing education requirements established
 3 by the board in regulation.

4 * Sec. 35. AS 14.30 is amended by adding new sections to read:

5 **Article 15. Reading Intervention.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (B) providing methods to monitor student progress;

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

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

29 (3) provide training to school district staff related to using the results
 30 of the statewide screening tool and understanding evidence-based reading
 31 interventions, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness,

1 phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading
2 comprehension;

3 (4) require that districts identify the early education programs attended
4 by students and report to the department the average score on each performance
5 screening tool by students in grades kindergarten through three who

6 (A) attended a state-approved early education program;

7 (B) attended a Head Start program;

8 (C) attended a private early education program;

9 (D) did not attend an early education program;

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

14 (6) review, approve, and assist districts developing alternative
15 standardized reading screening tools in any language for use by school districts.

16 (b) In adopting a statewide screening tool under (a)(1) of this section, the
17 department shall consider the following factors:

18 (1) the amount of time needed to administer the screening with the
19 intention of minimizing effects on instructional time;

20 (2) the time frame for reporting screening results to teachers,
21 administrators, and parents or guardians;

22 (3) the integration of the screening with student instruction and
23 department support;

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

27 (5) whether the screening tool is culturally responsive.

28 **Sec. 14.30.765. Reading intervention services and strategies; progression.**

29 (a) Each school district shall offer intensive reading intervention services to students
30 in grades kindergarten through three who exhibit a reading deficiency to assist
31 students in achieving reading proficiency at or above grade level by the end of grade

1 three. The district shall provide the intensive reading intervention services in addition
2 to the core reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education
3 classroom. The intensive reading intervention services must, to the extent practicable,

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

8 (2) provide explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness,
9 phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading
10 comprehension, as necessary;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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; and

28 (10) support reading intervention at home by parents or guardians by
29 offering a list of adult literacy resources and organizations, providing opportunities for
30 parent or guardian participation in training workshops, and encouraging regular parent
31 or guardian-guided home reading activities.

1 (b) In addition to the reading intervention services provided under (a) of this
2 section, a school district shall provide an individual reading improvement plan for
3 each student in grades kindergarten through three who is determined to have a reading
4 deficiency based on the statewide screening tool. An individual reading improvement
5 plan developed under this section must

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

8 (2) be created by the student's reading teacher in consultation with the
9 school principal, the student's parent or guardian, and other pertinent district staff;

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

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

15 (5) include a process for monitoring progress and adjusting the plan
16 based on student needs;

17 (6) provide to the student's parent or guardian at least 10 reading
18 progress updates each school year;

19 (7) be culturally responsive; and

20 (8) support the student reading at home with a parent or guardian by
21 offering a list of adult literacy resources and organizations, providing opportunities for
22 parent or guardian participation in training workshops, and encouraging regular parent
23 or guardian-guided home reading activities.

24 (c) If at any time during the school year a student in grades kindergarten
25 through three demonstrates a reading deficiency, the district or school shall notify the
26 student's parent or guardian. The initial notification must

27 (1) be provided to the student's parent or guardian not later than 15
28 days after identification of the reading deficiency;

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

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

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

5 (5) explain that the district or school will inform the parent or guardian
6 orally or in writing, as selected by the parent or guardian, of the student's progress
7 toward grade level reading as outlined in the student's individual reading improvement
8 plan;

9 (6) identify strategies for the parent or guardian to use at home to help
10 the student succeed in reading;

11 (7) explain that if the student has a reading deficiency at the end of the
12 school year and is in grades kindergarten through two, the student's progression may
13 be delayed unless the student has previously not progressed to the next grade;

14 (8) explain that a student in grade three should demonstrate sufficient
15 reading skills to progress to grade four under (e) of this section, unless the student
16 receives a waiver under (f) of this section or has previously not progressed to the next
17 grade;

18 (9) explain the process and deadline to request a waiver under (f) of
19 this section; and

20 (10) identify mid-year progression as an option for students who do
21 not progress to the next grade.

22 (d) If it is determined, based on a statewide screening administered in the
23 spring, that a student in grades kindergarten through two has a reading deficiency, the
24 student's teacher and other pertinent district staff shall notify and attempt to meet with
25 the student's parent or guardian to explain that the student will not be able to maintain
26 adequate academic progress at the next grade level. School staff shall work with the
27 parent or guardian to schedule a date, time, and place for the meeting, to be held not
28 later than 45 days before the end of the school year. Following that meeting, the parent
29 or guardian shall determine whether the student will progress to the next grade. If no
30 parent or guardian attends the meeting or if the parent or guardian does not determine
31 whether the student will progress to the next grade, the superintendent or the

1 superintendent's designee shall, after considering the student's best interest and
2 whether the student has previously not progressed to the next grade, determine
3 whether the student will progress to the next grade.

4 (e) A student in grade three should demonstrate sufficient reading skills to
5 progress to grade four. A student demonstrates sufficient reading skills to progress to
6 grade four by

7 (1) scoring at grade level or higher on the statewide screening tool or
8 on the statewide summative assessment;

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

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

13 (f) If it is determined, based on a statewide screening administered in the
14 spring, that a student in grade three has a reading deficiency, and the student does not
15 demonstrate sufficient reading skills to progress to grade four under (e) of this section,
16 the student's teacher and other pertinent district staff shall notify and attempt to meet
17 with the student's parent or guardian to explain that the student is not prepared to
18 progress to grade four. School staff shall work with the parent or guardian to schedule
19 a date, time, and place for the meeting, to be held not later than 45 days before the end
20 of the school year. Following that meeting, the parent or guardian may decide that the
21 student will not progress to grade four or decide to progress the student to grade four
22 by signing a waiver developed by the department acknowledging that the student is
23 not prepared and agreeing that the student will participate in an additional 20 hours of
24 individual reading improvement plan intervention services during the summer before
25 the student enters grade four. If no parent or guardian attends the meeting or if the
26 parent or guardian does not determine whether the student will progress to the next
27 grade, the superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall, after considering the
28 student's best interests and whether the student has previously not progressed to the
29 next grade, determine whether the student will progress to grade four.

30 (g) A superintendent or superintendent's designee may exempt a student from
31 delayed progression when progression is in the student's best interests. When

1 determining if progression is in a student's best interests, the superintendent or
2 superintendent's designee shall consider whether

3 (1) the student has received intensive reading intervention services for
4 two or more years and still demonstrates a reading deficiency;

5 (2) the student's primary language is a language other than English;
6 and

7 (3) the student has a disability and has an individualized education
8 plan under AS 14.30.278 or a plan under 29 U.S.C. 794.

9 (h) If no parent or guardian attends the meeting, and a superintendent or
10 superintendent's designee decides that a student in grades kindergarten through three
11 will not progress to the next grade under (d) or (f) of this section, the district or school
12 in which the student is enrolled shall provide immediate oral and written notification
13 to the student's parent or guardian. The written notification must explain that the
14 parent or guardian may reschedule the meeting provided under (d) or (f) of this section
15 and that during a meeting

16 (1) for a student in grades kindergarten through two, the parent or
17 guardian may decide to progress the student; and

18 (2) for a student in grade three, the parent or guardian may decide to
19 progress the student to grade four by signing a waiver under (f) of this section.

20 (i) For a student who does not progress to the next grade under (d) or (f) of
21 this section, or who progresses to the next grade with a waiver under (f) of this
22 section, the district in which the student is enrolled shall

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

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

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

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

31 (B) supplemental tutoring offered by a person with specialized

1 reading training;

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

5 (4) develop a plan for reading at home outlined in an agreement with
6 the student's parent or guardian, including parent or guardian participation in training
7 workshops and regular parent or guardian-guided home reading activities.

8 (j) For a student who does not progress to grade one, grade two, or grade three
9 under (d) of this section, the district in which the student is enrolled shall, upon
10 request by the student's parent or guardian, develop a plan for the student's mid-year
11 progression.

12 (k) A school district shall adopt a policy providing for mid-year progression of
13 a student who does not progress to grade four under (f) of this section if the student

14 (1) demonstrates sufficient reading skills to progress to grade four on
15 the fall or winter statewide screening; and

16 (2) meets additional requirements determined by the district, including
17 satisfactory achievement in other subject areas.

18 (l) A district shall, for the remainder of the academic year, and, if necessary,
19 for additional school years, continue to implement an individual reading improvement
20 plan for a student promoted mid-year under (j) or (k) of this section.

21 (m) Unless a parent or guardian decides that a student will not progress to the
22 next grade under (d) or (f) of this section, a district or school may not delay the
23 student's progression under this section if the student previously did not progress to
24 the next grade.

25 (n) In this section, "reading teacher" means a teacher who

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

27 (2) has demonstrated effectiveness in instructing students to read at or
28 above grade level as measured by student reading performance data and in teacher
29 performance evaluations; and

30 (3) meets the requirements established by the state Board of Education
31 and Early Development in regulation.

1 **Sec. 14.30.770. Department reading program.** (a) The department shall
2 establish a reading program to provide direct support for and intervention in intensive
3 reading intervention services annually in the lowest-performing 25 percent of schools
4 serving students in grades kindergarten through three as determined under
5 AS 14.03.123. The department shall determine how many schools may be adequately
6 served by the department's reading specialists and select schools from the lowest-
7 performing 25 percent of schools to participate in the reading program. A school
8 participating in the reading program that remains in the lowest-performing 25 percent
9 of schools as determined under AS 14.03.123 may apply to participate in the reading
10 program again in the following school year. State funding provided to participating
11 schools for implementation of the reading program is in addition to the amount of
12 funding provided under AS 14.17. In conducting the program, the department shall

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

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

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

19 (4) employ and assign reading specialists to direct the implementation
20 of the intensive reading intervention services established under AS 14.30.765 by

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

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

26 (C) training teachers in data analysis and using data to
27 differentiate instruction;

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

29 (E) reporting on school and student performance to the
30 department;

31 (5) establish a reporting process for each reading specialist to submit

1 updates to the department on implementation of the program;

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

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

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

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

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

13 (B) provide explicit and systematic skill development in the
14 areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading
15 fluency, oral language skills, and reading comprehension;

16 (C) are evidence-based and reliable;

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

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

22 (b) A school selected to participate in the reading program established under
23 this section shall

24 (1) ensure that a reading specialist assigned to the school is not
25 required to perform functions that divert from the duties the department has assigned
26 to the reading specialist;

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

31 (3) present on the reading program established under this section and

1 the intensive reading intervention services established under AS 14.30.765 at a public
2 meeting; the presentation must include

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

5 (B) a detailed overview of the reading program and intensive
6 reading intervention services;

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

9 (D) the implications of the program for students, families, and
10 educators;

11 (4) provide notice of the public meeting required under (3) of this
12 subsection to the parent or guardian of each student at least seven days before the date
13 of the meeting;

14 (5) present an annual update on the school's implementation of the
15 reading program and intensive reading intervention services at a public meeting with
16 notice provided to the parent or guardian of each student at least seven days before the
17 date of the meeting;

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

21 (c) The department shall publish on the department's Internet website and
22 make available to the public

23 (1) a completed application from each school selected to participate in
24 the reading program; and

25 (2) the reading program and intensive reading intervention services
26 implemented by each school selected to participate.

27 (d) The department may employ a person as a reading specialist under this
28 section if the person

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

30 (2) has completed an approved graduate program at an approved
31 institution of higher education and

1 (A) has completed a supervised practicum or internship as a
2 reading specialist; or

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

6 (3) is knowledgeable about and demonstrates competency in reading
7 instruction, including

8 (A) an understanding of phonemic awareness, phonics,
9 vocabulary development, reading fluency, oral language skills, and reading
10 comprehension;

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

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

15 (D) an understanding of and experience in reading screenings
16 and data analyses that inform instruction;

17 (E) knowledge of dyslexia and other learning disorders that
18 affect reading achievement;

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

23 (4) meets other reading instruction coursework requirements
24 established by the department in regulation, including coursework in indigenous
25 language learning and culturally responsive education established in regulation by the
26 department in collaboration with indigenous language stakeholders.

27 **Sec. 14.30.775. Regulation.** The department shall, by regulation, define
28 "dyslexia" for the purposes of AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.780. The department shall
29 consider the meaning of "dyslexia" given by the International Dyslexia Association
30 when adopting the definition by regulation.

31 **Sec. 14.30.780. Definitions.** In AS 14.30.760 - 14.30.780,

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

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

7 * **Sec. 36.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding a new section to read:

8 **Article 16. Virtual Education.**

9 **Sec. 14.30.800. Virtual education consortium.** (a) The department shall, in
10 cooperation with school districts, establish a virtual education consortium for the
11 purpose of making virtual education and professional development resources available
12 to students and teachers in the state. The department shall establish standards for
13 consortium resources. The consortium shall create and maintain a database of virtual
14 education courses for students, training in virtual instruction for teachers, and
15 professional development courses for teachers of students throughout the state if the
16 coursework curriculum meets the state standards established by the department. The
17 database must be accessible to all school districts that participate in the consortium.

18 (b) For teachers delivering or facilitating virtual coursework to students
19 through the consortium database, the consortium shall provide training and
20 professional development on virtual instruction methods and the differences between
21 virtual instruction and instruction offered in a classroom. A teacher may not provide
22 instruction through a course for students that is in the database unless

23 (1) the teacher has completed the training or professional development
24 provided by the consortium; or

25 (2) the consortium determines that the teacher's previous experience
26 has prepared the teacher to provide virtual instruction and the teacher demonstrates the
27 skills necessary to provide virtual instruction.

28 (c) The consortium shall employ a reading specialist available to school
29 districts to provide virtual intensive reading intervention services. The duties of the
30 reading specialist include

31 (1) modeling effective instructional strategies for teachers by working