

“Alaska Students’ Educational Bill of Rights”

A BILL BY INITIATIVE

AN ACT REQUIRING THE STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA TO ACT AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF ALASKA RECEIVE A QUALITY EDUCATION

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Alaska:

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

SHORT TITLE. This Act shall be known as the “Alaska Students’ Educational Bill of Rights.”

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

FINDINGS AND INTENT.

The People of Alaska find as follows:

- (1) Article VII of the Alaska Constitution requires the legislature to “maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State” and establishes the University of Alaska.
- (2) State education policy, set forth in AS 14.03.015, is “to help ensure that all students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.”
- (3) A quality education for students of all ages is a concrete investment that vastly improves the future prosperity, welfare, productivity, and vitality of society.
- (4) Learning starts at birth and critical brain development occurs prior to the age of three.

- (5) It is the role of the State of Alaska, Department of Education and Early Development, the State Board of Education and Early Development, and the University of Alaska to implement state education policy.
- (6) Current laws fail to provide direction to the State and the University of Alaska sufficient to implement state education policy in a meaningful way.
- (7) This Act is intended to ensure that the State of Alaska and the University of Alaska take concrete and active measures to ensure that students receive a quality public education in the manner set forth herein.

***Sec. 3.** AS 14.07.020(a) is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(18) implement the state education policy set forth in AS 14.03.015 by acting and making recommendations to ensure that:

(A) students of all ages have access to a continuous system of high-quality public education;

(B) incentives are in place to make voluntary pre-elementary programs as available, affordable, and high-quality as possible;

(C) investments are made in high-quality, voluntary pre-elementary programs that reflect the best available data on outcomes for students throughout their academic careers;

(D) public schools are safe, accessible, and modern in order to facilitate an environment conducive to learning;

(E) public schools receive the tools, including salaries and benefits, to attract and retain highly-qualified professionals in a manner that is competitive with other jurisdictions;

(F) public schools provide a classroom environment, including class-size, caseloads, and educator workload, that is conducive to frequent one-on-one interactions with educators;

(G) public schools offer a comprehensive education that includes career and technical education; engineering; world languages; language arts; mathematics; physical

education; science; social studies; technology; visual and performing arts; consistent with the provisions of AS 14.35.010-030; and other electives offering enrichment;

(H) voluntary pre-elementary programs and public schools offer access to extracurricular activities that enhance skillsets beyond the classroom;

(I) voluntary pre-elementary programs and public schools prepare students to be good citizens and productive members of society;

(J) public schools provide culturally sensitive curricula, including programs, experiences, and teaching methods that speak to and preserve Alaska Native identity and history, and reflect the needs and cultures of diverse student populations;

(K) where practicable, voluntary pre-elementary programs and kindergarten through twelfth-grade public education are available at or near each student's place of residence; and

(L) voluntary pre-elementary programs and public schools provide for the social and emotional needs of students in order for them to succeed in their program expectations and academic studies.

***Sec. 4.** AS 14.07.165(a) is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(6) regulations implementing the provisions of AS 14.07.020(a)(18);

***Sec. 5.** AS 14.40.170(a) is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(11) ensure that a quality public university education is affordable and accessible to Alaskans of all economic means and provides a clear value when compared to universities in other jurisdictions;

(12) provide for the maintenance of university facilities;

(13) ensure that academic programs and educational technology, including connectivity among university campuses, support lifelong learning opportunities for Alaskans in urban and rural Alaska;

(14) encourage research, discovery, and creative activities and, where appropriate, the commercialization of those activities in support of economic development and

diversification;

(15) ensure coordination with Alaska's schools in the preparation of educators and education leaders, and through provision of dual enrollment opportunities for academically qualified students;

(16) collaborate with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development to ensure that Alaska's students are prepared for a productive career that meets the needs of Alaska's employers;

(17) provide programs and services that build on and contribute to the rich cultural diversity of Alaska's people; and

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

EFFECTIVE DATE. As provided by Article XI, sec. 6 of the Alaska Constitution, this Act takes effect 90 days after enactment.

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

SEVERABILITY CLAUSE. As provided by AS 01.10.030, if any provision of this Act, or the application of it to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of this Act and the application to other persons or circumstances are not affected.