

34th Legislative Session Conclusion

Legislative Update | October 13, 2026

Eleilia Preston, Legislative Liaison



MISSION

An excellent education for every student every day.



VISION

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.



PURPOSE

DEED exists to provide information, resources, and leadership to support an excellent education for every student every day.





Alaska's Education Challenge

Five Shared Strategic Priorities

- 01 Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
- 02 Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
- 03 Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.
- 04 Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.
- 05 Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.



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History of the Bill/Process after Session

Content Slide Template

- During the 34th Legislative session, the Department of Education and Early Development followed closely over 100 bills. As bills were being introduced, the DEED staff would decide if it would affect the DEED. If it would, we would start the monitoring process which would include a deep dive into the bills content and how it would affect our process, cost, and other factors.
- After a bill is read across the floor, it makes its way to committees that it has been referred to. The DEED experts and myself would listen to the committee and offer any assistance to the sponsor of the bill. The DEED team would also prepare fiscal notes for each committee because the requirements of the bill would change based on individual committee's amendments.
- Once a bill has passed both bodies, it will then be sent to the Governor's desk where he has the option to sign it, let it go into law without signature, or veto it. This session there were nine bills that went into law without signature, and one bill that was vetoed.



Bills that went into law

Nine bills were let go into law without signature.

Bill Number and Short Title	Summary	Sponsor
EDU: Schools/Teachers/ School Board/Loan Program – HB 28	HB 28 includes establishing a three-year teacher loan-repayment pilot for high-need fields; clarifying that students departing correspondence programs may retain textbooks and equipment; allowing districts to reemploy retired teachers during staffing shortages; creating an annual statewide energy-cost reimbursement based on a three-year average; updating the required local contribution formula; providing hold-harmless protections for districts undergoing school consolidation; requiring annual statewide academic and workforce progress reports; and updating school board member eligibility requirements, including provisions for limited substitute teaching during emergencies.	Representative Story
Education for Deaf & Hard of Hearing – HB 39	HB 39 requires school districts to give parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing complete, neutral information about communication options, hearing technology, services, and programs. It ensures parents can choose the communication method best suited to their child, with services delivered by professionals trained in that method. The bill also directs the Department to support one or more programs for the deaf—programs that may include residential services—and allows a district to operate such a program through an agreement with the Department.	Representative Allard



Bills that went into law

Nine bills were let go into law without signature.

Bill Number and Short Title	Summary	Sponsor
Arts and Culture Day – HB 221	HB 221 establishes Alaska Arts and Culture day on the first Friday of October each year.	Representative Hall
Special Education Service Agency Funding – HB 246	HB 246 changes the rate of the allocation from \$23.13 to \$26.89 times the state’s average daily membership for the previous year.	Representative Josephson
Medical Major Emergencies; CPR Curriculum– HB 27	HB 27 was amended to incorporate provisions requiring the Department of Education and Early Development to adopt curricula for hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instruction in public schools and determine the grade levels that will receive instruction. Public schools serving those grade levels shall offer the instruction if practicable.	Representative Mina



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Bill Number and Short Title	Summary	Sponsor
School Board Term; Training; City Councils – SB 143	SB 143 increases local authority by allowing municipalities to determine school board term lengths and city council sizes. It also enhances board member accountability through mandatory ethics and budget training. The bill aims to improve governance efficiency, boost voter participation, and better accommodate the needs of smaller communities.	Senator Yundt
Civics Education – SB 23	SB 23 requires the State Board of Education to provide a rigorous civics curriculum and assessments. High school students must meet a civics requirement—by completing a semester course, passing a written or project-based assessment, or showing prior equivalent achievement—to earn a “seal of civic readiness” on their diploma or transcript. The requirement applies to students entering ninth grade on or after July 1, 2026, with exemptions for students with disabilities and late transfers.	Senator Stevens



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Bill Number and Short Title	Summary	Sponsor
School Nutrition/Meal: Prohibit Food Dyes – SB 187	SB187 prohibits public schools from serving food or beverages containing certain artificial food dyes as part of breakfast or lunch programs provided to enrolled students during the school day. Specifically, the bill prohibits the use of Red Dye 3, Red Dye 40, Yellow Dye 5, Yellow Dye 6, Blue Dye 1, Blue Dye 2, and Green Dye 3 in foods and beverages served through public school meal programs.	Senator Wielechowski
REAA & Small Muni Fund: Mt. Edgecumbe – SB 146	SB146 expands the allowable use of the REAA and Small Municipal School District School Fund. Specifically, the bill authorizes the department to use REAA funds for construction and major maintenance projects at MEHS. Additionally, the bill removes the existing \$70 million cap on the unobligated and unexpended cash balance of the REAA fund.	Senate Finance



Vetoed Bill

Bill Number and Short Title	Summary	Sponsor
Public Schools; Mental Health Education – SB 41	SB 41 amends existing health education law, AS 14.30.360 , health education curriculum; physical activity guidelines, by specifically adding mental health education to the statute. This bill allows for students to receive on-going education on mental health by: 1) explicitly adding mental health and physical health to the list of health topics, and encouraging school districts to include mental health in their kindergarten through 12th grade health education programs, and 2) requiring the State Board of Education and Early Development to provide school districts with health education guidelines for instruction in mental health that are developed in consultation with the Department of Health, the Department of Family and Community Services, and representatives of national and state health organizations. The mental health guidelines are to be developed within two years of the effective date. This bill also instructs the department's report to the legislature to include a copy of the guidelines developed, and the process used to develop them.	Senator Gray-Jackson



Contact

Deena Bishop, Ed.D., Commissioner

Department of Education and Early Development

deed.commissioner@alaska.gov

907.465.2802

Eleilia Preston, M.Ed., Legislative Liaison

Department of Education and Early Development

Eleilia.Preston@alaska.gov

907.500.4103



Stay Connected



education.alaska.gov



@alaskaDEED



907.465.2800

Teacher Certification: 907 465 2831