

# Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education Legislative Update



*Tuesday, January 20th began the 26th Alaska Legislative session in Juneau. During this session, the GCDSE is keeping you up-to-date by monitoring legislative action and tracking bills that relate to issues concerning health, education, disabilities, and services in the State of Alaska.*

Volume 3, Issue 6

Friday, March 27, 2009

## **HB 81, HB 83: Operating Budget**

The operating budget for fiscal year 2010 passed the House, and is currently being heard by the Senate. Some increments important to the Governor's Council are:

- **Autism Initiative:** This is a 5-part initiative designed to improve diagnosis, treatment, and support of individuals with autism and their families. Three components were funded in the budget this year:
  - Expanded Autism Diagnostic Clinic: \$125,000
  - Workforce Development Capacity: \$125,000
  - Alaska Autism Resource Center: \$350,000
- **Infant Learning Program Initiative:** This initiative was created to help infant learning programs across Alaska cover operating expenses and implement a professional development plan which would enable ILP providers to meet the highly qualified requirements of IDEA.
  - ILP services: \$1,000,000
  - Workforce Development: \$300,000
- **Adult Preventative Dental Medicaid Services:** This program will fund services to prevent emergency dental care for adults on Medicaid and promote regular care of teeth, which includes exams, cleaning, tooth restoration or extraction, and dentures.
  - Matches and restoring program funding: \$6,133,800
  - Program reauthorization: \$1,154,600
- **Rural Transition Program:** This program helps students in special education find the resources and connections they need to transition into the adult world after they are finished with school.
  - Rural Transition funding: \$150,000
- **Homeless Prevention and Program Services:** This program will help create affordable housing with adequate support services for Mental Health Trust beneficiaries.
  - Program funding: \$10 million in the *capital budget*—\$6 million of that is new funding this year.

## **SB 109: Repeal Secondary School Exit Exam**

This bill would repeal the Alaska high school exit exam. Started in 2001, it has not been successful in making sure that students have basic study skills or that they are ready for college. It also may be contributing to a higher high school dropout rate. The exit exam would be replaced with a more effective way to measure student success.

**Sponsor(s):** Senator Davis

**Status:** 2/17 read & referred to education; 3/16 heard & held

**Link to Bill Text:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=SB109](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=SB109)



### **Held Committee Referrals and Bill Hearings**

#### **HB 9:**

**Capital Punishment**  
March 23 heard & held

#### **HB 187:**

**Private Autism Insurance Coverage**  
March 24 heard & held  
March 25 co-sponsors Kerttula, Gara added

#### **SB 1:**

**Minimum Wage**  
March 27 heard & held

#### **HB 26:**

**Adult Dental Medicaid**  
March 27 **Passed House**

#### **HB 105:**

**STEP Program**  
March 27 heard & held

## SB 102: Compulsory School Attendance Age / Truancy

This bill would require that every student who is at least seven years old but younger than 18 years old must attend school. The maximum compulsory age has been raised from 16 to 18 years in order to decrease high school dropout rates.

**Sponsor(s):** Senators Davis, McGuire

**Status:** 2/06 introduced; 3/16 title change in (S) Education and referred to (S) Judiciary

**Link to Bill Text:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=SB102](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=SB102)

## Current Status of Bills in All Legislative Updates

### **Senate Bills:**

**SB 1: Minimum Wage**

3/27 heard in (S) Finance

**SB 28: Public Education of Homeless Students**

1/21 referred to (S) Education

**SB 32: Medicaid Rate Review**

3/30 scheduled for hearing in (S) Finance

**SB 38: Pharmacy Benefits Managers, Managed Care**

4/03 scheduled for hearing in (S) Health & Social Services

**SB 44: Safe Abandonment of Infants**

1/21 referred to (S) Health & Social Services

**SB 61: Mandatory Universal Health Insurance**

3/16 heard & moved out of committee

**SB 82: Medicaid for Adult Dental Services**

2/04 referred to (S) Finance

**SB 83: Vocational Rehabilitation Committee**

2/06 referred to (S) Finance

**SCR 1: Brain Injury Awareness Month—March 2009**

3/11 signed by Governor as Legislative Resolve 2

### **House Bills:**

**HB 9: Capital Punishment**

3/30 scheduled for hearing in (H) Judicial

**HB 26: Medicaid for Adult Dental Services**

3/27 **PASSED HOUSE**

**HB 29: Minimum Wage**

3/12 amended & referred to (H) Finance

**HB 59: Pre-Elementary School Programs and Plans**

1/20 referred to (H) Education

**HB 62: Medical Assistance Eligibility / Premiums**

1/20 referred to (H) Health & Social Services

**HB 69: Early Childhood Education: Rating and Visits**

2/13 heard & held

**HB 89: Vocational Rehabilitation Committee**

1/28 referred to (H) Labor & Commerce

**HB 105: STEP**

3/27 heard

**HB 125: Minimum Wage**

2/11 referred to (H) Labor & Commerce

**HB 187: Private Autism Insurance Coverage**

3/24 heard & held

## Upcoming Committee

### Hearings

#### **March 23**

8:00am

**HB 9: Capital Punishment**  
(H) Judiciary  
Room 120 State Capitol  
(teleconferenced)

9:00am

**SB 32: Medicaid Rate Review**  
(S) Finance  
Room 532 State Capitol  
(Teleconferenced)

#### **April 1**

8:00

**SB 109: Repeal Secondary School Exam**  
(S) Education  
Beltz 211 State capitol  
(Teleconferenced)

#### **April 3**

1:30pm

**SB 38: Pharmacy Benefits Managers, Managed Care**  
(S) Health & Social Services  
Room 205 State Capitol  
(Teleconferenced)

*For more information about upcoming hearings, please link to:*

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/hearing\\_form.asp?session=26](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/hearing_form.asp?session=26)

### **If you have any Questions or Comments, please contact:**

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