

# 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

## Operating Budget moving to Conference Committee!

HB 81 and HB 83, the operating budget bills, have moved *out* of the Senate and are prepared to enter the Conference Committee! There, representatives from the House and Senate will compromise on the items that they disagreed on, and come to a final decision on the operating budget for fiscal year 2010.

### **ACT NOW!!**

The Conference Committee will convene within the next week. There will be no public testimony during that time, but you can still call or e-mail the committee members! Here are the names of some of the committee members:

**Senator Hoffman:** [Senator Lyman Hoffman@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Lyman_Hoffman@legis.state.ak.us)  
465-4453

**Senator Stedman:** [Senator Bert Stedman@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Bert_Stedman@legis.state.ak.us)  
465-3873

**Representative Hawker:** [Representative Mike Hawker@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Mike_Hawker@legis.state.ak.us)  
465-4949

**Representative Stoltze:** [Representative Bill Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Bill_Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us)  
465-4958

## Tell the Legislators What You Think!

The legislative session closes on April 19th—less than two weeks from today! Many bills covered in these legislative updates have had very little movement this session. Some of these bills are:

- **HB 59, Pre-elementary School Programs and Plans**, would establish a state-wide early childhood education plan for students 3-4 years old that provides for the most effective coordination with or expansion of pre-elementary programs in Alaska. It was introduced on January 20th, and it has not moved since. Its first hearing is Monday, April 6th, at 8:00am.
- **HB 69, Early Childhood Education: Rating and Visits**, would establish a voluntary parent education home visiting program for pre-elementary aged children that would enhance parent understanding and involvement in their children's education. It would also establish a rating system for early childhood education. It had its last meeting on February 13th.
- **SB 28, Public Education of Homeless Students**, would work to make sure that homeless students (as defined in the bill) can continue their public education in their school of education whenever possible. It was introduced on January 21st, and has not had any hearings.

If you have any interest in these, or other bills you've seen in the legislative newsletters, don't hesitate—call or e-mail your legislator today and tell them how important it is for these bills to be heard!



## Held Committee Referrals and Bill Hearings

### HB 9:

**Capital Punishment**  
March 23 heard & held

### SB 32:

**Medicaid Rate Review**  
March 23 moved out of committee

### SB 109:

**Repeal Secondary School Exit Exams**  
April 1 heard & held

### SB 38:

**Pharmacy Benefits Managers, Managed Care**  
April 3 heard & held

### Hb 105:

**STEP Program**  
April 3 moved out of committee

## Upcoming Committee Hearings

**April 6**

**8:00am**

**HB 59: Pre-elementary School Programs/plans**  
(H) Education  
Room 106 State Capitol

**1:00pm**

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

**1:30pm**

**HB 29: Minimum Wage**  
(H) Finance  
Room 519 State Capitol

**April 7**

**9:00am**

**SB 1: Minimum Wage**  
(S) Finance  
Room 532 State Capitol

**1:30pm**

**SB 61: Mandatory Universal Health Insurance**  
(S) Labor & Commerce  
Room 211 State Capitol

**April 8**

**3:15pm**

**HB 89: Vocational Rehab Committee**  
(H) Labor & Commerce  
Room 124 State Capitol

*All meetings are teleconferenced, and can be found at <http://www.ktoo.org/gavel/>*

*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)*

## HCR 13: Federal Stimulus Package

This resolution states that the Alaska Legislature, on behalf of the state of Alaska, accepts all funds offered by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 to create jobs and promote economic growth. Those funds will include:

**\$34,300,000** for special education services;

**\$126,700,000** for Medicaid program maintenance;

**\$1,800,000** for vocational rehabilitation services;

**\$2,139,800** for Infant Learning Program infrastructure development and service expansion

**Sponsor(s):** Rules Committee

**Status:** 3/23 read and referred to (H) Finance; 3/27 passed House; 4/01 passed Senate; 4/06 transmitted to Governor

**Link to Bill Text:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=HCR13](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=HCR13)

## HB 178: Payments to Physicians: Medicaid/Pro Bono

This bill will provide an incentive to doctors who provide qualified services in at least 200 visits with patients who are enrolled in the Medicare program. This incentive is important for Alaskans with Medicare. There were approximately 51,000 Alaskans enrolled in Medicare in 2005, and 20% of them were enrolled because of a disability. In Anchorage, however, only 13 out of 75 doctors are willing to accept new Medicare patients; and many other cities in Alaska have similar statistics. This incentive is expected to mitigate that problem.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Gara, Holmes, Kawasaki, Harris, Gardner

**Status:** 3/12 read and referred to (H) H&SS committee

**Link to Bill Text:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=HB178](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=HB178)

## SB 133: Statewide E-Health Information Exchange

This bill will create a secure electronic health information system that is intended to improve health care quality, reduce errors, increase efficiency of care; promotes wellness, prevention and illness management through available and easily understandable health information; reduces health care costs; and improves the coordination of information and the provision of health care services.

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

**Status:** 3/02 read and referred to (S) H&SS committee; 3/16 heard & held; 3/30 referred to (S) Finance committee

**Link to Bill Text:**

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=SB133](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=26&bill=SB133)

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

Katie Bringold

GCDSE Legislative Intern

E-mail: [katherine.bringold@alaska.gov](mailto:katherine.bringold@alaska.gov)

Telephone: (907) 269-8462

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education

3601 C Street

PO Box 240249

Anchorage, AK 99524-0249