



SOUTHEAST ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Teacher's Retirement Challenges with the Four-day School Week "Year of Service" Definition (AS 14.25.220 & 14.25.590)

Under current statute, listed below, teachers are required to work 172 days in a given year for that year to be counted as a full year for retirement. In a conversation with the Division of Retirement and Benefits, their representative stated that this was a fixed number and hours per day were not a consideration.

Alaska Statute 14.25.220. Definitions.

(47) "year of service" means service, except for military and territorial service, during the dates set for a school year; partial-year service credit is given for membership and BIA service as follows:

- (B) on or after July 1, 1969, during any school year,
 - (xi) 172 days or more, 1.0 years;

Alaska Statute 14.25.590. Definitions.

(28) "year of service" means service during the dates set for the school year; partial-year service credit is given for membership service as follows:

- (A) during any school year,
 - (xi) 172 days or more, 1.0 years;

During our research, we found that other states allow for alternatives for teachers who teach at schools on alternative schedules. For example, in their Teacher's Retirement System Handbook, Montana defines full-time service for teachers as follows:

'Full-time service' means service at least 180 days in a fiscal year; or at least 140 hours a month during at least nine months in a fiscal year; or, at least 1080 hours in a fiscal year under an alternative school calendar adopted by a school board and reported to the Office of Public Instruction as required by §20-1-302, MCA. The standard for full-time service for a school district operating under an alternative school calendar must be applied uniformly to all employees of the school district required to be reported to the retirement system.

Since Alaska's current statute does not take into consideration how to address situations where teachers work more than the standard numbers of hours per day for an entire school year, a revision to the state's definition of full-time service could be beneficial. While SISD teachers would work 172 days in the current four-day week schedule we are proposing, this type of change would give us more options for scheduling.

We are looking for support to modify the current statutory definitions for "year of service" to include a minimum number of hours per month for nine months and/or hours per year during the fiscal year for a teacher's service to be considered full time (1.0).