

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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Senator Gary Stevens *President of the Senate*

SPONSOR STATEMENT **Senate Concurrent Resolution 19**

The issue of incentivizing our high school students to do better in school, to prepare for and complete college, is more complex than simply providing a tuition scholarship upon graduation.

However, that by itself is an issue requiring more focused thought and discussion as the legislature prepares to reform the K-12 educational system, with particular emphasis on the transition to and preparedness for postsecondary study.

We must first put into context the idea of there being a new and/or expanded form of postsecondary financial aid provided to our graduating high school seniors. SCR 19 complements existing legislation that would create a basic scholarship program structure, but would need further review before codifying a specific award level, or tiered award levels.

We are on the cusp of establishing a comprehensive reform of Alaska's educational system. As the Legislature decides this session on what type of reform measures to take, including a scholarship program structure for our graduating seniors, it's this task force's imperative to define the best means of applying awards in the program(s). In the event of no such legislation passing the legislature, then this task force would also carry the mantle of recommending which scholarship program structure to establish, in addition to the best way of applying scholarship awards.

As the task force begins work, besides defining an award structure, the goals of a scholarship program should ultimately include efforts to: improve preparedness of Alaska students for postsecondary education; improve postsecondary graduation rates; increase high school graduation rates; improve scores on college entrance examinations; increase participation of Alaska high school students in Alaska postsecondary institutions; and increase job training opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration of this worthwhile endeavor.