



Alaska Performance Scholarship

An invitation to excellence, extended to students, parents and educators alike.

SB43/HB104 Renaming the Alaska performance scholarship...and establishing scholarship investment and award funds

What does SB43/HB104 do?

1. The Governor's bill amends statutes to rename the statewide scholarship. The name "merit scholarship" currently in statute puts Alaska at risk of infringing on an existing copyright held by the National Merit Scholarship organization.
2. Further, the bill establishes both an award fund into which appropriations can be made and from which scholarship awards will be paid to students, and an investment fund into which the legislature may make appropriations and others may make donations. The bill specifies the Legislature may make appropriations from the investment fund into the award fund.
3. Finally, the bill permits Alaska taxpayers to make donations into the scholarship investment fund and qualify for a tax credit against the corporate income tax.

Why is SB43/HB104 necessary?

During the 2010 legislative session Governor Parnell proposed establishing a statewide scholarship for Alaska's students based on the principle that if our students: (1) take a curriculum which prepares them to succeed in postsecondary education, and (2) work hard and perform well in school, we should incent and reward them for pursuing postsecondary education and training in Alaska. This not only will benefit students but also the state as a whole by growing a skilled, local workforce and reducing the need for non-resident hires. The Alaska Legislature embraced this strategy and approved a merit scholarship which the Governor then signed into law.

The Governor has introduced this bill to avert the consequences of the copyright infringement noted above, and, more importantly, to propose establishment of a fund with characteristics consistent with the final recommendation of the Legislature's Joint Higher Education Scholarship Funding Task Force¹.

Why is this funding structure being proposed?

Governor Parnell strongly believes the scholarship is a commitment to Alaska's students, and it is critical to the success of the program that these scholarship awards have a long-term, sustainable funding stream. Additionally, the Governor seeks to make it possible for any interested party to support the scholarship's workforce development objectives by donating to the fund. To the extent that there are Alaska taxpayers with an interest in donating, they are incented to do so through the corporate income tax credit for eligible donations.

Thank you for taking the time to discuss SB43/HB104. We are extremely appreciative of the support and valuable time and attention legislative leaders have given this matter and look forward to continuing our collaborative work to advance education and workforce development in Alaska.



¹ http://hesf.aksenate.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/2010_Scholarship_Funding_Final_Report.pdf