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SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE Senators Kevin Meyer & Joe Thomas, Co-Chairs

Senate Bill 169

When the Alaska Performance Scholarship was established in 2010, 81 schools and seven districts were not able to offer the courses needed for students to qualify for the scholarship. All were smaller schools in rural districts. Sixty-three schools did not offer the full complement of science courses, and 32 schools did not offer the full complement of math courses. (Sixteen of these overlap, leaving a total of 81.)

Some students in these schools are able to take courses by distance delivery. While distance delivery is not an optimal way to take a math or science course, the quality of offerings is improving. There are a variety of options and styles of coursework available both privately and through the Department of Education and Early Development.

One option is for students to take dual-credit courses. In a dual-credit course, the student receives high school and college credit. When they come to college, they will already have some course credits.

Studies have shown that students who pass dual credit-courses tend to do better in post-secondary education than those with no dual credits. According to one researcher, "dual enrollment fosters more positive attitudes towards earning post-secondary degrees in students who did not previously hold these attitudes; dual enrollment participation greatly improves students' propensity to persist in college; and this persistence in turn improved greatly dual enrollment students' likelihood and odds to graduate from college with bachelor's or graduate level degrees." (*The Impact of Dual and Articulated Credit on College Readiness and Total Credit Hours in Four Selected Community Colleges* by Johyun Kim)

Senate Bill 169 provides funding for students without access to the coursework required for the Alaska Performance Scholarship to take courses from Alaskan post-secondary institutions that offer dual credit programs.

Currently students have to pay full university prices to take dual-credit courses. The least expensive course is \$430, but most courses will run between \$580 and \$870, not including fees which can be up to \$500. Often there is a travel component so the student can do labs, which can be as much as \$1000. This is prohibitive for many students. SB 169 levels the playing field so that all Alaskan students can compete for the Alaska Performance Scholarship regardless of geography or family financial limitations.

We urge you to support SB 171, and vote for its passage.