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District 30

HB 190

HB 190 allows students who demonstrate mastery of course material to challenge and test out of high school courses and receive academic credit. Currently there is no requirement that school districts provide an opportunity for students to challenge courses for academic credit. Though districts may have pre-approved tech prep plans for certain college courses, these are primarily focused on vocational coursework and are limited to established agreements between campuses. HB 190 would allow a student to test out of any high school course if they can demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. This bill leaves the criteria for demonstrating mastery to the discretion of the school district, but requires districts to provide an option for students to challenge courses.

With no unified approach to challenging courses across the state, students encounter different barriers in their districts, such as demonstrating mastery of a subject by taking a college course, but not accumulating enough seat time in the classroom to qualify for full high school credit. These students may receive partial or no high school credit for advanced courses they have mastered at the college level. This was a problem identified by the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program. This bill does not attempt to establish credit for courses that may be a prerequisite for the challenged course. Furthermore, the credits would apply to fulfilling requirements for the Alaska Performance Scholarship, but not necessarily be factored in to the student's GPA if no letter grade is given.

HB 190 would provide a needed opportunity for course credit and further encouragement for students who are independently completing courses outside of their high school. Keeping students engaged in learning and challenged with rigorous coursework benefits both the individual student and the districts supporting their continued education. HB 190 will remove a barrier to students who wish to receive credit for their coursework and support a learning environment that continues to challenge and reward student initiative.

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