

**From:** [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Senate Bill 208  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 9:14:00 AM

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**From:** jleiter@cookinletalaska.org [mailto:jleiter@cookinletalaska.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 8:53 AM  
**To:** Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 208

Dear Senator,

I am writing to you as a guidance counselor to ask you to please consider not cutting the APS from the budget. Over the past 5 years, since the APS was instituted in 2011, I have seen a surge in motivation among my students.

Whereas students really never used to care about whether or not they did well on their college entrance exams, my students now schedule their testing early enough that they can take it again, and maybe even a 3rd time, to get the scores they need to get the APS, which makes a big dent in their very expensive post-secondary school bills.

Whereas my students, by the time they reach their junior and senior years, used to "bolt" out of school early in the day to go to a job or waste their day away, they now stay in school all day as juniors and seniors, working hard to take the "hard" classes to make them eligible for the APS.

Whereas my students were never that interested in their cumulative GPA, they now come to my office frequently to check on their GPA.

Whereas my students never use to consider going to KPC or UAA, they are now much more interested because of the money they will get to off-set school bills. Even if they can't get their full degree in Alaska, they are more likely to consider doing their first two years here.

Many of my students who do go to the lower 48 to get their Bachelor's now come back to Alaska and pursue their Masters Degrees in-state because they know that APS money is available to help them do that. Which makes them much more likely to stay in Alaska when they are finished with their schooling.

This program, more than any other program I have ever seen, has done everything it was created to do, and more. It is funded from annual earnings on a savings account set aside for that purpose so there is no annual drain on the state general fund. (In other words, the APS is one of the few sustainably funded state government line items.)

If this program is cut, there's one thing you can be sure of....the motivation it created for our students to stay in school, take the hard courses, keep their grades up and stay in Alaska for college will cease. And I truly believe you will see less revenue in our Alaska economy because those students will go to school elsewhere and put their money into another state's economy.

Think about it, at most, a student who receives the top level of the APS is awarded \$4,755 per year, and a year of college in Alaska costs right around \$20,000. Where does that extra over \$15,000 come from? Obviously, from the student, who is paying that money right back into our economy. On top of that, they are buying gas and food and anything else they need right here in Alaska. Cut that fund, and that money WILL leave Alaska and support another state's budget. It's simple math.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jill Leiter/Guidance Counselor