

Alaska State Legislature

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House Education Committee

HB 148 **Sponsor statement**

The Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) is a highly valuable program in Alaska which provides Alaska's brightest students with an incentive to attend postsecondary education in Alaska. Studies show that upon completion from college, students most often will choose to live and work near the college where they graduate. In order to meet current and future workforce needs, we need more Alaskan students to learn at Alaskan colleges.

HB 148 makes meaningful changes that will encourage a greater number of Alaskans to attend postsecondary schooling by providing them with financial resources to help students reach their educational goals. Since the APS program began, award levels have remained constant while the cost of education has risen. HB 148 increases the award levels and provide students with greater financial resources they can apply towards the cost of higher education.

HB 148 makes changes to recognize the increasing role of career and technical education (CTE) for many students in high school by adding CTE curriculum as a qualifying path to earn an APS.

Parents, students, and educators have expressed desire for the earlier notification of awards for the Alaska Performance Scholarship Program. HB 148 legislation provides for earlier notification of financial scholarships available to assist families when determining which postsecondary school to attend and the net cost for in-state versus out-of-state institutions.

HB 148 removes the APS requirement for college entrance exams such as SAT/ACT testing prior to attending college. A large number of colleges across the United States are taking similar measures since the pandemic. In Alaska, the current requirements for testing often create a hardship for students who are required to travel to Anchorage or other locations where testing services are offered. The cost of travel from many communities off the road system are very high. When combined with testing fees, hotel, food, and other travel related expenses, many families may choose to forgo the potential of earning an APS based solely on whether they can afford for their student to travel to a testing center.

Some students in high school may not fully achieve their educational goals in high school for one reason or another, and their grade point average (GPA) may not reflect their true abilities. HB 148 includes a "step-up" provision which allows the college to review the student's GPA on an

annual basis after completing two semesters. If the student works diligently in college, and their GPA increases as a result of their hard work, the amount of funding they receive for their APS will increase to the level commiserate with their new GPA. The “step-up” provision encourages diligent effort by students during their postsecondary education.

The Education Committee believes these enhancements to the Alaska Performance Scholarship Program will help foster a greater level of benefit to attend University of Alaska schools, and will prepare Alaskans to meet the current and anticipated workforce development needs for many years to come.