

TALKING POINTS
GOVERNOR'S EDUCATION INITIATIVE
7 Components to Improve Education

1. Base Student Allocation (BSA) Increase

- FY 15 – Increase of \$85 per student to \$5,765
- FY 16 – Increase of \$58 per student to \$5,823
- FY 17 – Increase of \$58 per student to \$5,881
- This allocation is in addition to the 25M one time funding that has been included in the budget to offset energy and increased fixed costs.
- *The proposed BSA increase recognizes that instructional costs have also gone up and that a modest increase will provide relief to school district budgets in support of delivering quality education to Alaska's students.*

2. Repeal of Exit Exam

- Removes exit exam (HSGQE) that has outlived its usefulness. With more rigorous standards and other assessments in place, it is no longer needed.
- Provides choice of tools to inform students, parents, schools of readiness for college or career training. Currently, WorkKeys is required in 11th grade. This bill allows students to choose most relevant test; WorkKeys or the SAT, ACT.
- *The savings from repealing the exit exam will cover one administration per high school student of his or her choice of the SAT or ACT (college-prep) or WorkKeys (career-prep).*
- Because these assessments are used as qualifying assessments for the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS), every high school student will have opportunity for his or her achievement to be evaluated for APS.
- Former students who have certificates of achievement will have opportunities to pass the exit exam until June 30, 2017, and gain a high school diploma.

3. Testing out for Credit

- This bill would require that a school district provide a high school student an opportunity to “test out” of a class and allow students to earn course credits in math, language arts, science, social studies, and world languages by demonstrating mastery of the content through a district-approved assessment. *Credit would also apply to the Performance Scholarship.*
- *This allows students to advance at their own pace, using school time to add to their skills and knowledge. Some students will be able to complete high school early or earn additional credits toward college.*

4. Tax Credits

- This credit incentivizes the private sector to partner with local school districts in two ways-1) fund scholarships to students earning dual credits (*high school and college credit*) to defray costs of tuition, registration, course and textbook fees, and 2) for housing at residential schools (construction, maintenance or operations).

5. Technical vocational education program (TVEP)

- TVEP sunsets June 2014. This bill would extend that sunset until 2024. TVEP currently provides funds to identified educational institutions across Alaska for technical and vocational education (or CTE).
- The bill requires institutions receiving TVEP to offer courses that permit high school students to earn dual credit by requiring articulation agreements between the institution and at least one high school.

6. Charter schools- Appeals and Funding clarification

- Currently, charter school applicants have no recourse for reconsideration if denied by their local school board. This bill would require local school boards to put in writing approvals or denials of charter school applications, with relevant findings of fact and conclusions of law. A written decision by the local board creates a public record and promotes accountability.
- If denied, applicants may appeal to the commissioner. The commissioner may remand the appeal back to the local school board for further review, uphold the denial, or suggest approval. If approval is suggested, the application goes to the state board for review and consideration.
- This bill provides clarification of current language designed to fund charter schools in the same manner as other schools in a district. The clarifying language includes specific formulaic components of the BSA that a student generates. These include the special needs, career and technical instruction, pupil transportation components as well as the facilities component (construction and major maintenance) that specific schools generate. These funding provisions provide more clarity and financial stability for charter schools.

7. Residential schools

- Districts can only apply to open a new residential school that would be available for funding during open application periods. The bill would require that DEED open an annual application period.
- The bill would also increase the boarding to reflect basic understanding of actual costs to house and care for a student 24/7. This promotes the financial stability of such schools.