

# Alaska State Legislature

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## **REPRESENTATIVE Paul Seaton**

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### **HB 365 Sponsor Statement**

The Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) was created in 2010 through Senate Bill 221 and represents a recurring investment in Alaska's future through post-secondary education scholarships. The Legislature also supported a long-term plan to fund APS in perpetuity, demonstrating commitment to make higher education more affordable to residents.

Students are currently eligible to receive a scholarship if they meet the criteria in one of three tiers of awards laid out in 4 AAC 43.020. Criteria for awards include completion of a rigorous curriculum, standardized examination, and grade point average requirements. Standardized examinations used in all three award levels are the ACT, SAT or WorkKeys. The WorkKeys examination is designed for entry into career and technical fields. However, if qualifying for the APS through the WorkKeys examination, students may only apply their scholarship to a career or technical program that results in the award of a certificate. It cannot be applied to a two-year Associate's degree, which is often the degree needed to advance in a career or technical field.

House Bill 365 will expand the application of an Alaska Performance Scholarship earned through WorkKeys examination to include degree programs. Students who have demonstrated the necessary requirements to obtain an Alaska Performance Scholarship should not be limited to using it only towards a certificate program when an Associate's degree or other degree may best launch them into a vocation most appropriate for their skills and experience. Current statute impedes students' pursuit of career paths, especially those offered through a two-year degree.