



April 5, 2023

120 4th St,
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

We, the Coalition of Student Leaders from the University of Alaska, are writing to express our strong support for House Bill 148 on the Alaska Performance Scholarship. We believe that this legislation will have a positive impact on the lives of many students in Alaska.

The Alaska Performance Scholarship has been instrumental in providing financial assistance to students who demonstrate academic achievement and potential. However, the program has limited its effectiveness, making it more difficult for many students to access these crucial funds. HB 148 seeks to address these issues by making changes to the program that will ensure that more students are able to receive the support they need to pursue their educational goals.

As student leaders at the University of Alaska, we have seen firsthand the impact that the Alaska Performance Scholarship has had on our peers. Many of our fellow students have relied on this program to make their college education more affordable and accessible. Without this support, many of these students would not have been able to attend college at all.

We believe that HB 148 represents an important opportunity to strengthen the Alaska Performance Scholarship and ensure that it continues to provide critical support to students in Alaska. We urge you to support this legislation and help ensure that all students in Alaska have access to the financial resources they need to pursue their educational goals.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,
Coalition of Student Leaders
University of Alaska

James Sexton

From: Megan Murphy [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 6, 2023 3:32 PM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 148

I am writing to you as a school counselor of a high school in the Central Peninsula. As I look through the amendments that are being proposed to the Alaska Performance Scholarship I am so thankful for the changes that you are proposing be made. I appreciate your efforts in trying to get more of our students to stay in our state. With that being said, I am concerned about the College Entrance Exam Requirement. With the majority of colleges going test optional these days and ACT/SAT testing not being required at high schools in our state this is really an obsolete requirement. Also, with so many of our schools being rural and not being able to pay for the ACT or SAT or gain access to testing sites, this isn't a requirement that is equitable for all students. As a high school counselor this requirement is the number one barrier to students not qualifying for the Alaska Performance Scholarship. Also, if our goal is to increase the number of students using this scholarship and staying in state then getting rid of this testing requirement would be a big push towards increasing numbers of students utilizing this wonderful opportunity. Next, if students are meeting GPA and curriculum requirements, why do they need to get certain scores on the SAT or ACT? We should trust our public educators and believe that they are doing their job preparing our students for life after high school. Thank you so much for your time with this very important issue and all the incredible changes that are being made within this important bill. I appreciate you taking the time to read this email, Megan Murphy.

**Megan Murphy, School Counselor, Last Names N-Z
(she,her)**

Although I am often in classrooms or in meetings, I will respond to your email or phone call within 24 business hours.

Join us on Instagram [REDACTED]

[Soldotna High School Counseling Program website](#)

Soldotna High School

[REDACTED]
Soldotna, Alaska 99669
[REDACTED]



James Sexton

From: LaDawn Druce [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 9, 2023 12:28 PM
To: House Education
Subject: House Bill 148

Hello members of the House Education Committee,

I would like to offer this written testimony in favor of proposed changes to the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

I was in the queue on Friday; but was not able to continuing holding after an hour, as I was at work.

Fortunately, Megan Murphy, my fellow colleague and lead counselor for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, was able to provide testimony.

Ironically, FaceBook reminded me it was also on April 7 of 2016 that Megan and I were testifying against SB208, that if passed would have eliminated the AK Performance scholarship program.

I support the proposed changes of increasing the amounts for the three levels, the extension of six years to eight years, and the inclusion of more career tech ed type courses and AK Native Languages to count toward the curriculum categories.

I also see on Page 2, Section 5 language which may suggest the college entrance exams (SAT/ACT) no longer would have specific "cut scores" but language suggesting "a minimum score" on said exams.

My proposal would be to eliminate all together the requirement for the college entrance exams. There are several reasons for this suggestion.

1. No college or university in Alaska requires a minimum score on the ACT or SAT for acceptance. The University of Alaska Fairbanks has in the past required one of tests be taken, however their website states this requirement has been waived through the summer of 2025.
2. There is the issue of equity. Some students may not meet the financial requirements to obtain a fee waiver. The tests are currently \$60 for each test, each time taken. Also, some students may not have access to the test in their areas. I was just in Nanwalek last week. A student needing this test would have to arrange air travel to and from Homer and overnight accommodations.

Without the standardized tests requirements, students would still need to take extra credits and specific courses and maintain a 2.5 GPA for the minimum level of award.

If we trust our public educators are doing their job and offering a rigorous curriculum and grading standards, then an "outside" test should not be necessary.

Sincerely,
LaDawn Druce
"Retired Counsleor" KPBSD
[REDACTED]

Sterling, AK 99672
HD 8

Sent from Outlook

James Sexton

From: HeatherR [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 4:41 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge
Subject: HB148

To House Education Committee:

Hello, I would like to state a request for HB 148. In the event that it passes, may it be said that it is retroactive to include the 2022 high school graduates. We have a number of students that were not able to take the SAT due to Covid. Many were still taking online courses at home, and/or being home-schooled.

They were 2021-22 seniors. In 2020 & 2021, the requirement for testing was waived. I do not believe there was adequate knowledge of testing reinstated, nor time, as we were still dealing with Covid restrictions and rules. The testing days were limited and full.

They are finishing their first year in college. They will be in the middle of this legislation and Covid-19, and be left without representation. Going forward, at Alaska colleges, they need your support.

I appreciate your presentation of HB 148.
Please consider an amendment to include retroactive to 2022.

Thank you for your time,
Heather Richardson
[REDACTED]

James Sexton

From: Rep. Jamie Allard
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:41 AM
To: House Education
Subject: FW: Regarding Bill HB 148 Alaska Performance Scholarship.

From: BeLinda Ebel [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 10:01 AM
To: Rep. Jamie Allard <Rep.Jamie.Allard@akleg.gov>
Subject: Regarding Bill HB 148 Alaska Performance Scholarship.

Dear Representative Jamie,

Regarding Bill HB 148 Alaska Performance Scholarship.

My name is BeLinda Ebel and I am a contact teacher with the IDEA homeschool program and 20-year homeschool mother.

My understanding of the Alaska Performance Scholarship is the state wants to support students, keeping them in our state education system. With this understanding, I am asking you to reconsider the minimum standards for the scholarship. I personally know numerous students who have taken a rigorous curriculum of courses and earned a solid GPA; however, they have struggled with scoring a SAT/ACT score high enough to qualify for the Alaska Performance Scholarship. All the students I am referring to have completed numerous college courses, most through the UA system, and have scored A's and B's. These students demonstrate a sincere desire to attend college and are capable of pursuing a college degree. Can you please consider changing the qualification for the APS scholarship to be GPA or SAT/ACT score? And, if you are concerned the suggested "GPA only student's" are capable of completing college courses without scoring a high enough SAT/ACT score because their parents assign their final grades, please consider adding an additional qualify line that states something along the lines of:

"If students complete 9-15 credits of 100 level or above at an accredited college university and receive a GPA of 2.5 or higher they qualify for the Alaska Performance Scholarship."

Following are two personal examples I would like to share.

A dear friend of mine completed a mixed education of homeschooling and brick and mortar schooling. During her junior and senior year of high school she diligently worked part-time while attending high school. She had a GPA qualifying her for APS; however, her SAT scores were too low to qualify. Yet, she successfully completed a few college courses. Today she has worked multiple jobs while attending college, receiving her associate degree from UAF. She would have benefited greatly from the additional support of the Alaska Performance Scholarship. She is one of many examples of Alaskan students in this same situation, including my own daughter who is in the process of completing her fifth semester of college courses while completing high school. She will graduate from high school with 32 credits of 100 level or higher college courses. She plans to attend college and has taken the SAT/ACT tests twice; however, she struggles with severe test anxiety and will not qualify for the APS scholarship with the current baseline SAT/ACT score. She is completely capable of earning a college degree and she will. The adjustment of the qualification baseline would provide her needed financial support.

Please consider adjusting the Alaska Performance Scholarship baseline to include out-lying, talented, high school students who have taken college courses by including a qualifying metric such as:

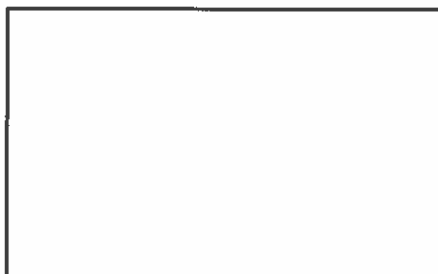
"If students complete 9-15 credits of 100 level or above at an accredited college university and receives a GPA of 2.5 or higher they will qualify for the Alaska Performance Scholarship."

Thank you,

BeLinda Ebel
Contact Teacher K-12

[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99701

[REDACTED]
 [/IDEA Families](http://IDEA Families)



**House Education Committee
HB 31 Testimony of Support
February 20, 2023**



Co-Chairs Ruffridge and Allard, members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Emily Ferry. I work for the Association of Alaska School Boards as the Collective Impact Coordinator and part of my job is working to improve access to postsecondary education opportunities. I'm joined this morning by my son Elias who is a freshman at Juneau Douglas High School.

The Association of Alaska School Boards is in support of **HB 148**. AASB's Delegate Assembly has two resolutions supporting this legislation. These are:

- **RESOLUTION #5.21 SUPPORTING THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP**
- **RESOLUTION #5.22 SUPPORTING CTE CREDIT FOR THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP**

The changes proposed in HB 148 would provide for several improvements that would make the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) more flexible, competitive, and effective in providing an opportunity for all Alaska students to be supported in their pursuit of postsecondary education.

The proposal to include CTE credits as a means to qualify for the APS has long been supported by the Association of Alaska School Boards members. We know that career and technical education courses can often make the direct connection between learning and applying academic subjects like language arts and mathematics to real job skills a reality. Incorporating and acknowledging the value and effectiveness of those credits increases the opportunity for a large demographic of students to access this valuable and needed support.

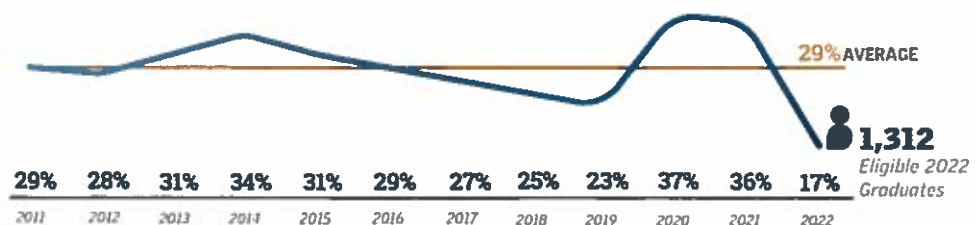
On a personal note, my son Elias has found the CTE courses he has taken in Intro to Construction, Computer Added Design, and Finance to be among his favorite high school courses. It can be hard for students to fit CTE credits in if they don't count toward the APS Scholarship. These changes increase flexibility and access to CTE courses.

H.B. 148 also helps meet Alaska's workforce needs. The Department of Labor has indicated that 65% of jobs in Alaska will require a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025. Right now, only about 55% of Alaskans have the necessary degrees and credentials. As indicated by recent reports on the Alaska Performance Scholarship commissioned by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, if we want more Alaskans to earn degrees and credentials then one of the most important things we can do is remove unnecessary barriers, like the ACT and SAT

testing requirement. Research indicates that a student's ability to take a standardized test is not an accurate indicator of rigor or readiness. H.B. 148 modernizes the APS.

EXHIBIT 3

Percent of Public High School Graduates Eligible for APS by Graduating Class, 2011-2022



As indicated by this graph from the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education's 2022 APS Outcomes Report, removing the testing requirement over Covid resulted in a jump in eligibility. Adding in the testing requirement post-pandemic further depressed eligibility.

Alaska's postsecondary students are comprised of a large number of non-traditional students. Extending the period the scholarship is available to a student increases the likelihood of them completing their studies. Students that may come from low economic status, which may force them to alternate between school and earning and living, including supporting their education, will benefit greatly. Often students that originate from our most rural school districts may also face challenges when having to balance supporting their families and local communities with completing their education. As an example, providing a more extended opportunity for students pursuing a career in education, especially Alaska Native students working to be a teacher in their local schools, is critically important to our state in helping to solve our teacher recruitment and retention crisis. These students often face barriers our system rarely considers.

HB 148 proposes a modest increase in financial support to students. Like many other programs designed to help students, the financial support from APS has not kept up with inflation, tuition, or housing costs. AASB is adamant that our education system, from kindergarten through post-secondary education, needs to be as equitable and supportive of each student as it can be. For many Alaska students, the affordability of pursuing a postsecondary education that prepares them for our workforce is the real reason to increase the scholarship awards.

Research shows that most students access these types of scholarships - and earn degrees & credentials - when they have people dedicated to helping them. As a busy and engaged parent myself, I know that having support to help guide me and my student to postsecondary opportunities is critically important.

HB 148 is part of the solution to increasing participation in the Alaska Performance Scholarship. AASB knows that it also takes the support of adults such as career guides and counselors to help students navigate and successfully apply for opportunities that lead them to success in postsecondary education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Emily Ferry

AASB Collective Impact Coordinator



AASB Resolutions Supporting HB 31

5.21 SUPPORTING THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP (APS)

AASB urges support for the Alaska Performance Scholarship for our high school students.

Rationale: APS has been successful in that more of our high school students are taking a rigorous course load in order to be eligible for the scholarship and after entering college take fewer remedial, or developmental, coursework, according to statistics compiled by the Alaska Postsecondary Commission. The recipients of APS also accumulated credits at a faster pace than non-recipients and were nearly twice as likely to continue their college attendance, the commission reported in 2016.

5.22 SUPPORTING CTE CREDITS FOR THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP

AASB urges support to allow students to substitute up to two units of Career Technical Education (CTE) classes to count as requirements towards the two to four-year college awards levels for the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

Rationale: Career technical education classes are often not selected due to the fact that they do not count toward the APS award if planning to go to two to four-year colleges in our state. CTE classes only count towards our technical schools. CTE classes are desired by many students in exploring careers and options and are relevant and engaging in keeping students in high school.