

# *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 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 attend Alaskan colleges and institutions.

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 earlier notification of the Alaska Performance Scholarship Program and when APS awards are announced. HB 148 CS legislation provides for APS notification to students beginning in the ninth grade, remaining APS requirements while in their Junior year, and award notifications in August after completing 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Earlier notifications of APS awards will assist families when determining which postsecondary school to attend and the analysis of costs for in-state versus out-of-state institutions.

HB 148 CS gives students the option to use either their grade-point average (GPA) or college entrance exam (such as SAT/ACT) scores to determine their APS award level. Many students in Alaska, including those living in rural locations, are not able to take the SAT/ACT as it may be cost prohibitive or geographically inaccessible.

Some students may not fully achieve their educational potential in high school for one reason or another and their GPA may not reflect their true abilities. HB 148 includes a "step-up" provision which allows the postsecondary institution to review the student's GPA on an annual basis. If the student improves their grade average, the amount of funding they receive for their APS will increase to the level commiserate with their new GPA. HB 148 CS directs the commission to

develop an equivalent rating for qualified postsecondary institutions that do not use a four-point grading scale.

The Education Committee believes these enhancements to the Alaska Performance Scholarship Program will help foster greater interest in attending Alaska's institutions. Encouraging more students to remain in-state for their postsecondary education will help meet the current and anticipated workforce development needs for many years to come.