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SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

SB 56: AK PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP; ELIGIBILITY

Version S

Updated 5.1.2023

Section 1: Amends *AS 14.43.820(a)(2)* *Alaska performance scholarship program; eligibility*, by allowing a student to qualify for the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) 18 months prior to graduating from an Alaska state high school instead of 6 months.

Amends *AS 14.43.820(a)* to allow Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses to count towards APS eligibility in three ways:

- *AS 14.43.820 (a)(3)(A)*: Replace one year of social studies with one year of CTE coursework (within Math & Science Track)
- *AS 14.43.820 (a)(3)(B)(ii)*: Replace two years of world language with two years of CTE coursework, one year of which is sequentially more rigorous, within a career cluster.
- *AS 14.43.820 (a)(3)(C)*: Replace one year of social studies with one year of CTE coursework (within Social Studies & Language Track)

Deletes *AS 14.43.820 (a)(5)*, removing the college entrance exam requirement from the Alaska Performance Scholarship. Additional language in Section 4 allows for a GPA **or** a college entrance examination to qualify instead of requiring both.

Section 2: Adds language to *AS 14.43.820(g)* defining “career cluster” as a group of jobs and industries that are related by skills or products and renumbering the subsection accordingly.

Section 3: Adds the following new subsections to *AS 14.43.820*:

- *AS 14.43.820 (h)* requiring districts to inform students in 9th or 10th grade about the Alaska Performance Scholarship.
- *AS 14.43.820 (i)(j)(k)* requiring students be notified of their APS eligibility progress by December 31st of their junior year. Award recipients must be notified of their award and level by August 15th of each year. Any communications with students regarding the APS must include information about the ability to increase the scholarship amount outlined in *AS 14.43.825(g)-(i)*.
- *AS 14.43.820 (l)(m)* establishing that an applicant must be enrolled in any remaining course requirements, must have a qualifying GPA, and once graduating from high school, be enrolled in a qualifying postsecondary institution to receive the award. The applicant’s GPA upon graduation will be used to conclude the final award amount. The award would be revoked if requirements were ultimately not met.

Section 4: Amends AS 14.43.25(a) by increasing all award levels and allowing for a GPA **or** an equivalent rating established by the Department of Education and Early Development **or** minimum score on a college entrance examination to qualify. The qualifying GPA or minimum score and new award level are as follows:

- Level 1: 3.5 GPA/equivalent rating or above **or** a very high minimum score, \$7,000 (increased from \$4,755)
- Level 2: 3.0 GPA/equivalent rating or above **or** a high minimum score, \$5,250 (increased from \$3,566)
- Level 3: 2.5 GPA/equivalent rating or above **or** a moderately high score, \$3,500 (increased from \$2,378)

Section 5: Amends AS 14.43.25(b) by increasing the number of years a student can use the scholarship after graduating high school from six to eight years.

Section 6: Adds language to AS 14.43.25(c) extending an award recipient's eligibility to use the scholarship by one semester for each semester they are enrolled in part-time status. They are still required to remain in good standing. Currently, a part-time student will only receive half of the award for that semester and forego the remaining funds. This language ensures recipients receive their full award regardless of full or part-time enrollment.

Section 7: Adds two new subsections (g) and (h) to AS 14.43.825.

Subsection (g) directs the Department of Education and Early Development to establish regulations creating a GPA equivalent rating for schools that do not award grades on the traditional 4.0/5.0 grading scale.

Subsection (h) requires postsecondary institutions to review award recipients' grade point averages each time they complete two semesters. If a recipient's postsecondary institution grade point average qualifies for a higher-level award as outlined in AS 14.43.25(a), their award amount will be adjusted accordingly.

Section 8: Adds a conforming change to the definition of "grade-point average" in AS 14.43.849(2) to include the equivalent rating established by Department regulations for schools that do not use the traditional 4.0 or 5.0 grading scale.