

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

April 12, 2013

8:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Senator Mike Dunleavy, Vice Chair
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Berta Gardner

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 180

"An Act relating to the Alaska Challenge Youth Academy; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HB 180 OUT OF COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 190(EDC)

"An Act providing for course credit in secondary school based on demonstrated mastery of the subject."

- HEARD AND HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 180

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) T.WILSON

03/20/13	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/20/13	(H)	MLV
03/26/13	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 106
03/26/13	(H)	Moved Out of Committee
03/26/13	(H)	MINUTE(MLV)
03/27/13	(H)	MLV RPT 7DP
03/27/13	(H)	DP: REINBOLD, HUGHES, HIGGINS, GRUENBERG, SADDLER, LEDOUX, FOSTER
04/01/13	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
04/01/13	(H)	VERSION: HB 180

04/02/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/02/13 (S) STA
 04/03/13 (S) STA REFERRAL WAIVED
 04/03/13 (S) EDC REFERRAL ADDED
 04/05/13 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
 04/05/13 (S) Heard & Held
 04/05/13 (S) MINUTE(EDC)
 04/12/13 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HB 190

SHORT TITLE: CREDIT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) SEATON

03/28/13 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/28/13 (H) EDC
 04/03/13 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
 04/03/13 (H) Scheduled But Not Heard
 04/05/13 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
 04/05/13 (H) Heard & Held
 04/05/13 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
 04/08/13 (H) EDC RPT CS(EDC) 4DP 1NR 1AM
 04/08/13 (H) DP: LEDOUX, SEATON, DRUMMOND, GATTIS
 04/08/13 (H) NR: SADDLER
 04/08/13 (H) AM: P.WILSON
 04/08/13 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
 04/08/13 (H) Moved CSHB 190(EDC) Out of Committee
 04/08/13 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
 04/11/13 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 04/11/13 (H) VERSION: CSHB 190(EDC)
 04/11/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/11/13 (S) EDC
 04/12/13 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE TAMMIE WILSON

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 180.

MCHUGH PIERRE, Deputy Commissioner

Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

Fort Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information related to HB 180.

REPRESENTATIVE PAUL SEATON

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 190.

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Education & Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to HB 190.

DR. HERB SCHROEDER, Executive Director
Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 190.

BRUCE JOHNSON, Executive Director
Alaska Association of School Administrators
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 190.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:00:25 AM](#)

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Gardner, Stedman, Huggins, Dunleavy, and Chair Stevens.

HB 180-MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY

[8:00:48 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS announced the consideration of HB 180.

REPRESENTATIVE TAMMIE WILSON, sponsor of HB 180, said this is the only program that she is aware of that works to put the students back into their community with a mentor to ensure they finish high school or help them go into the military. She stressed the importance of funding a successful program.

CHAIR STEVENS asked about the results seen from tracking graduates of the Academy.

[8:02:38 AM](#)

MCHUGH PIERRE, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, noted that a cadet is tracked after graduation for one year and then the success of that student is determined. Cadets are required to check in a minimum of once a month for a year. He noted there is a 95 to 97 percent success rate. Graduates are placed in jobs of 30 hours or more, or go to

college and take 12 or more credits, or are in the military. He said the bill will allow the Academy to go to the next level.

CHAIR STEVENS commented that it is nice to hear how graduates are doing.

SENATOR GARDNER asked about the student-to-adult ratio at the Academy.

MR. PIERRE replied that the ratio was 25 students to 1 teacher; however there are 90 employees. There are 202 cadets, so the ratio is 2.2 students to every adult. He explained that the training was very "hands on."

[8:05:36 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY spoke highly of the program and said it should be expanded. He stated he believes in multiple education models. He stressed that the students deserved the opportunity for success.

CHAIR STEVENS asked if expansion of the program is a possibility.

MR. PIERRE said yes. He added that HB 180 would allow a discussion about expansion. The way the budget works now would not make expansion possible.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked if expansion might occur in Fairbanks.

MR. PIERRE answered yes. Expansion was considered in 2005-2006 for Galena and for Fairbanks. There were National Guard Bureau facility requirements that did not allow that to happen. He pointed out that there might be space at Eielson Air Force Base in the future, if the need arises.

SENATOR GARDNER asked what the male-female ratio is.

MR. PIERRE said it is roughly 70 males to 30 females.

[8:09:14 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER noted her experience as a guardian ad litem of children in state custody. She recalled that several parents of these children enrolled in the Academy and were very successful.

CHAIR STEVENS closed public testimony.

[8:10:11 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY moved to report HB 180 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 180 was reported from the Senate Education Committee.

8:10:30 AM

At ease

HB 190-CREDIT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSES

8:12:11 AM

CHAIR STEVENS called the committee back to order and stated that the next order of business would be HB 190. [CSHB 90(EDC) was before the committee.]

REPRESENTATIVE PAUL SEATON, sponsor, introduced HB 190. He related that the need for the legislation became obvious when the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) testified before the House Education Committee. Students who took calculus in college, which is equivalent to a full year of high school math, were given only one semester credit due to the lack of seat time according to school district policy. He said that HB 190 allows students who demonstrate mastery of a subject to challenge and test out of high school courses and receive academic credit. Each school district can determine criteria for demonstrating mastery. It requires that school districts have an assessment tool for challenging the courses.

He said the credits in the bill would apply to the requirements of the Alaska Performance Scholarship, but would not necessarily factor into the GPA. The bill does not attempt to offer credit for pre-requisite courses.

He noted it varies by district as to whether they currently offer such an opportunity to challenge credits. The bill provides a unified, statewide approach toward keeping students engaged in learning challenging materials and receiving due credit.

He referred to an example of the "Credit by Choice" program from the Anchorage School District. He noted that some classes cannot be exempted.

8:16:57 AM

He clarified on page 1, line 10, of the bill that "it's within a reasonable time" and on line 11, "courses provided by the district that are likely to be, or have been, the subject of

challenge requested under this section." He summarized that when students are ready to have mastery of the subject, they can challenge.

[8:17:31 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS clarified that the standards would not be reduced or be made easier.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON agreed. He explained that success should not be measured by seat time. An alternative must be provided for students who have demonstrated mastery of a subject.

CHAIR STEVENS asked how small districts would handle this.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON explained that the bill applies to courses that a district offers.

[8:19:40 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY stated that the two bills before the committee will help students. He discussed College Level Examination Placement (CLEP), as it applied to foreign exchange students in the Mat-Su School District. He spoke positively about performance-based outcome programs.

SENATOR HUGGINS voiced support for the idea behind the bill. He addressed various levels of educational control and asked why legislation is required.

[8:22:47 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER noted the concept of adverse incentives, comparing the student's and the district's incentives. She pointed out that some students could pass a course without having taken it, such as composition; however, she suggested there would be benefits to taking the course. She noted she has mixed feelings about students testing out of many of their classes because she prefers that students excel, rather than meet standards.

[8:24:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON replied that he understood what Senator Gardner was addressing. He explained that the intent was to see students excel and to test out of classes they have already mastered. He suggested that the bill would encourage mastery rather than a pass/fail grade. It is up to the districts to decide the level of mastery.

[8:27:02 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER summarized that a district could set the level of mastery.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON said that is correct.

8:27:31 AM

CHAIR STEVENS clarified that districts would be encouraged to solve the issue, not mandate it. He suggested that CLEP might be the solution for some districts.

SENATOR DUNLEAVY commended Representative Seaton for the bill. He encouraged districts to move toward performance-based learning as a means of saving money.

8:29:33 AM

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education & Early Development, offered to answer questions. He stated that the issue is a district responsibility.

CHAIR STEVENS asked if the smaller districts should work with the larger districts to find solutions.

MR. MORSE said yes. He noted that the department could help facilitate that communication.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked how widespread CLEP is used in Alaska. He recalled how the Army used CLEP.

8:32:03 AM

MR. MORSE replied that he was unable to comment on CLEP usage. He said he has heard that students use it primarily for language credits.

DR. HERB SCHROEDER, Executive Director, Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP), thanked the committee for its work and for the citation honoring ANSEP. He related that ANSEP allows students from anywhere in the state to complete courses necessary to earn the Alaska Performance Scholarship by bringing students into Anchorage where they complete university classes. The problem for many students was that they were not given equivalent high school credit for the university credits they earned.

DR. SCHROEDER gave an example of a student who completed numerous college math courses that were not recognized by the student's high school. He said that HB 190 provides a mechanism for students to earn the correct number of high school credits

for completing a university course. He noted that, over time, many students will be able to graduate from high school early.

[8:35:22 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS summarized that there is antipathy between high school educators and college courses.

DR. SCHROEDER agreed. He said it appears to be a "seat time" issue.

SENATOR DUNLEAVY noted he has difficulty with the logic behind seat time.

BRUCE JOHNSON, Executive Director, Alaska Association of School Administrators, testified in support of continuous progress in moving kids forward on a level that is appropriate for them. He said that since the mid-nineties the Lower Kuskokwim School District has had a continuous improvement model where kids could take an assessment delivered at the district level to determine their placement in coursework. From that point forward, the students could challenge courses. Standards have pushed school districts in this direction. He noted that standards are going to become more rigorous with the implementation of Common Core.

He suggested that school districts would not be resistant to HB 190. Many schools are already teaching multiple level courses.

[8:39:12 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY asked if Common Core standards are being adopted in Alaska.

DR. JOHNSON said yes. He added that the state plans to adopt assessments that test the Common Core.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked about binding state policies.

DR. JOHNSON replied that he suspected that this proposal could be done through regulation at the department level or each district could assume the responsibility at the local level.

[8:41:14 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS concluded that HB 190 would not be a burden to school districts.

DR. JOHNSON agreed. He noted that schools could share information and adopt an assessment as the need arises.

SENATOR DUNLEAVY suggested the CLEPS program could also be used.

He asked where NEA stands on the bill.

CHAIR STEVENS acknowledged a "thumbs up" from NEA.

8:42:48 AM

CHAIR STEVENS held HB 190 in committee.

8:42:59 AM

There being no further business to come before the Senate Education Standing Committee, Chair Stevens adjourned the hearing at 8:42 a.m.