

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 28, 2021

8:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Harriet Drummond, Co-Chair
Representative Andi Story, Co-Chair
Representative Tiffany Zulkosky
Representative Grier Hopkins
Representative Mike Prax
Representative Mike Cronk
Representative Ronald Gillham

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 53

"An Act relating to residency requirements for public school enrollment for certain children of active duty military and National Guard members."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 48

"An Act relating to eligibility for the Alaska performance scholarship program."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 53

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY CHILDREN SCHOOL RESIDENCY WAIVER

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) MCCARTY

02/18/21	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
02/18/21	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/21	(H)	MLV, EDC
03/04/21	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/04/21	(H)	Heard & Held
03/04/21	(H)	MINUTE(MLV)
03/09/21	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

03/09/21 (H) Moved CSHB 53 (MLV) Out of Committee
03/09/21 (H) MINUTE (MLV)
03/10/21 (H) MLV RPT CS (MLV) 6DP
03/10/21 (H) DP: CLAMAN, TARR, SHAW, STORY, NELSON,
TUCK
04/28/21 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 48

SHORT TITLE: AK PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP; ELIGIBILITY

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) STORY

02/18/21 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
02/18/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/21 (H) EDC, FIN
04/12/21 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
04/12/21 (H) Heard & Held
04/12/21 (H) MINUTE (EDC)
04/28/21 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE KEN MCCARTY

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced HB 53.

DENEEN TUCK, Staff

Representative Ken McCarty

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information during the hearing on HB 53 on behalf of Representative McCarty, prime sponsor.

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison

Defense-State Liaison Office

U.S. Department of Defense

Olympia, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 53.

MARY HAKALA, Staff

Representative Andi Story

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information on HB 48 on behalf of Representative Story, prime sponsor.

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Division Operations Manager

Innovation and Education Excellence
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information and answered questions during the hearing on HB 48.

SANA EFIRD, Executive Director
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information during the hearing on HB 48.

KERRY THOMAS, Director of Program Operations
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information during the hearing on HB 48.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:03:17 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HARRIET DRUMMOND called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Representatives Story, Cronk, Gillham, Hopkins, and Drummond were present at the call to order. Representatives Zulkosky and Prax arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 53-MILITARY CHILDREN SCHOOL RESIDENCY WAIVER

[8:04:00 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 53, "An Act relating to residency requirements for public school enrollment for certain children of active duty military and National Guard members."

[Before the committee was CSHB 53(MLV).]

[8:04:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KEN MCCARTY, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 53. He said children of military servicemembers are currently not allowed to enroll in school until arrival in Alaska, resulting in missed deadlines and late course enrollment. Allowing registration, enrollment, or application prior to establishing residency, but with

documentation of a pending military relocation to the state, would reduce stress on the family and children during the transition between locations. He said no new online systems would be required, and advanced enrollment benefits school districts by allowing them to make projections based on expected student population.

[8:06:56 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:06 a.m. to 8:07 a.m.

[8:07:38 AM](#)

DENEEN TUCK, Staff, Representative Ken McCarty, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative McCarty, prime sponsor, reminded the committee that similar legislation was heard during the Thirty-First Alaska State Legislature as HB 109. She said the only difference between the two bills is a definition of the word "guardian."

[8:08:46 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked for a definition of "PCS," as referenced by Representative McCarty.

MS. TUCK deferred to Ms. Perreault.

[8:09:17 AM](#)

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison, Defense-State Liaison Office, U.S. Department of Defense, testified in support of HB 53. She explained that PCS means "permanent change of station," a term used when military personnel receive orders to move to a different duty station.

[8:10:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY shared her supposition that many states allow the practice as proposed in HB 53.

MS. PERREAULT replied that the policy is very popular in other states.

[8:11:26 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked whether there is a fiscal note attached to HB 53.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY replied no.

MS. TUCK briefly reviewed two zero fiscal notes.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY said he meant that there were two zero fiscal notes.

[8:13:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY shared her understanding that the proposal under HB 53 is currently being practiced, and that the proposed legislation would formalize the practice in statute.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY replied that is correct.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said she believes the bill is very good for families relocating to Alaska.

[8:14:27 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND said HB 53 was held over.

HB 48-AK PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP; ELIGIBILITY

[8:14:40 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND announced that the final order of business would be, HOUSE BILL NO. 48, "An Act relating to eligibility for the Alaska performance scholarship program."

[8:14:53 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:14 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.

[8:15:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY, as prime sponsor of HB 48, paraphrased the sponsor statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

For the last decade, the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) has made postsecondary education more accessible for Alaska's young adults. The scholarship has helped thousands of students afford college and career technical certifications and encouraged countless students to stay on track to be

college and career ready upon graduation. Furthermore, encouraging students to attend postsecondary education in-state reduces workforce shortages and out-migration.

However, according to a recent study by the McDowell Group for the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), the APS award has fallen almost $\frac{3}{4}$ short of its expected eligibility and use.

To expand student use, the original draft of this bill sought to expand the eligible pool of APS applicants by adding career technical education (CTE) courses as an option to the required curriculum for APS. The skills learned in CTE courses are needed in many career fields in the Alaska workforce. Furthermore, in Alaska, data shows that students enrolled in CTE concentrators are 17% more likely to graduate than their counterparts

Version G of House Bill 48 takes the vision of making APS more accessible to deserving Alaskans further, by incorporating the findings of the McDowell Group's APS study. The bill does this in five ways:

1. Allows career technical education (CTE) to count towards eligibility for the APS. This encourages students to pursue careers needed in the Alaska workforce.
2. Increases the eligibility window for use of the award from 6 years after graduation to 8 years.
3. Increases the award amount for the first time in over 10 years, keeping the scholarship competitive compared to offers from other institutions.
4. Removes the standardized testing requirements. There is growing evidence that college entrance exam scores aren't correlated to success in postsecondary performance, and that GPA is a much better indicator. Also, entrance exams are increasingly proven to create barriers to student eligibility because of the geographic and financial hurdles.
5. Keeps students aware of their standing and remaining requirements needed to achieve the award.

Financial assistance provided by the APS is vital to many young Alaskans seeking postsecondary training, including those who choose a CTE path. Postsecondary education offers students the opportunity to attain skills that can lead to industry jobs and satisfying careers. It also meets Alaska's goal of a skilled workforce.

[8:22:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY recalled a presentation by the McKinley Research Group on findings and recommendations regarding APS. Key takeaways, she said, were that annual scholarship awards amounted to approximately half of what was anticipated, and students served has declined since 2016. She reiterated that CTE students need to be part of the program, and she said her goal is to draft legislation that honors CTE within APS structure, increases opportunities for students to qualify for the scholarship, and eliminate some structural inequities in order to better serve Alaskan students who seek postsecondary training. When asked how APS affected decisions about postsecondary education, she said, 72 percent of surveyed students said APS was a major influence in the decision. She then directed committee members' attention to the committee packet and recommendation matrix.

[8:27:37 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked whether she was referring to the McDowell Group report.

[8:27:45 AM](#)

MARY HAKALA, Staff, Representative Andi Story, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Story, prime sponsor, pointed out that the initial matrix was provided by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, and was restructured for readability. She directed attention to page 9 of the report, which provides further analysis on the recommendations.

[8:28:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY reviewed the first recommendation, "Eliminate the distinction between CTE and academic eligibility." She said this could be "easily" achieved by eliminating the WorkKeys test.

[8:29:30 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked whether a specific recommendation is included in the proposed legislation.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY responded, "The only thing in my bill right now is expanding CTE eligibility." She expressed that her intention is to work with the committee on amendments based on the recommendations in the report.

[8:30:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether Representative Story intends to pass the bill during the current legislative session.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY replied that she intends to work on it through the interim, involving the university, Department of Education and Early Development, and other stakeholders. She said she wanted to discuss the recommendations made by the McDowell Group after assessment of APS.

[8:31:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked whether APS could be used at Northern Industrial Training.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY deferred to Ms. Riddle.

[8:32:19 AM](#)

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Division Operations Manager, Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development, responded that APS can be used at any Alaska training facility or university.

[8:33:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS expressed support for HB 48 based on discussions held in other committees.

[8:33:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK noted that educational focus has always been "go to college," and he expressed support for HB 48.

[8:34:07 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND noted committee members' agreement that the first recommendation should be part of the proposed legislation.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY expressed the importance of making sure students are aware of the possibility of using APS for technical education.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS offered that training centers in CTE areas should also be apprised, perhaps through the Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing (CBPL) at the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED).

[8:35:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND invited Ms. Efird to comment on the discussion.

[8:36:13 AM](#)

SANA EFIRD, Executive Director, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), pointed out that the committee packet includes a list of authorized institutions for APS students, and she said that ACPE is tasked with authorizing students and institutions eligibility.

[8:38:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked how the authorization process works.

MS. EFIRD replied that the institution would contact ACPE, which would provide the institution with the eligibility requirements.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked about eligibility for specific training programs, such as training to operate a crane.

MS. EFIRD responded that the institution would have to meet APS eligibility requirements through ACPE.

[8:40:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND commented that a former executive director of ACPE was also a former president of Northern Industrial Training.

[8:41:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY continued to the second recommendation, "Offer multiple pathways and opportunities for students to demonstrate academic rigor as an alternative to the current rigid curriculum requirements." She said students are currently required to take a certain number and type of credits for graduation, and that she hopes to add CTE classes to the curriculum and to change certain requirements to respond to those schools and districts that have insufficient staff to offer the full curriculum.

[8:42:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS expressed concerns regarding geographically inaccessible schools across the state. He then asked whether the number of applications for APS has been decreasing, and if so, whether there is space within the funding levels for ACPE to rebuild the program as originally intended.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY deferred to Ms. Efird.

MS. EFIRD stated that the commission received an appropriation of \$11.75 million to award APS scholarships, with actual disbursement of approximately \$9 million. She said original projections of need exceeded the appropriation, and APS funding comes from the higher education investment fund, with recommendations from the Department of Revenue regarding expenditures based on a 7 percent return on investment.

[8:45:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS commented that it would be a good thing for more students to access APS, and that ensuring the number of students served doesn't decline, especially in light of increasing education, is important.

[8:46:27 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked Ms. Efird what happens to the funds not used for APS.

MS. EFIRD replied that the money stays in the higher education investment fund.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked whether APS award levels are set in statute.

MS. EFIRD responded that award levels are set in statute, and that one of the recommendations that will be discussed is increasing awards to respond to inflation and increasing costs of higher education.

[8:47:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether ACPE could "figure it out" instead of changing the statute.

MS. EFIRD asked for clarification.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX said, "Apparently ... we need to change a statute in order to change the amount." He expressed that if the statute were to change, decision-making authority should be conveyed to ACPE, thereby making it easier to respond to changing market conditions.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY explained that the curriculum requirements are in statute, so the statute would need to be changed to convey authority to ACPE. She then acknowledged the committee's desire for flexibility.

[8:50:51 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND noted the dollar value of the award in the report referenced would require a statutory change.

[8:51:41 AM](#)

MS. HAKALA pointed out the complexity of the requirements and the need to have someone guide the student through the APS requirements.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY expressed her agreement, and she said Ms. Hakala's comment leads into the third recommendation, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Base eligibility determinations on the first three years of high school so students have APS award information when they are making their decisions. This will also bring APS in line with other scholarships (including UA's University Scholars) and will help make Alaska postsecondary schools more competitive.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said basing the award on the first three years instead of the full four years of high school would allow scholarship notification early enough so students can be aware of the requirements and plan accordingly.

[8:54:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked why the eligibility should be based on the first three years.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY replied that the scholarship requirements mean a student needs to start during their freshman year, because the curriculum is a "full load" each year of high school.

[8:56:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS said if flexibility in scholarship eligibility is to be expanded, it should be less specific in the exact number of credits per subject.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY deferred to Ms. Efird.

[8:58:15 AM](#)

MS. EFIRD said the focus of the recommendation under discussion is timing; students need to know by the end of junior year whether they will have the financial support of APS, so they can decide whether or where to attend considering the existence of funding. One of the major reasons for the existence of APS, she said, is to keep students in the state.

[9:00:20 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND expressed that it seems the committee members agree regarding recommendation three, then directed attention to recommendation four, which read, "Consider using round numbers for award levels to make them easier to remember and calculate."

REPRESENTATIVE STORY explained that the top-level award is currently \$4,755, and the recommendation is to make that award level \$5,000, and rounding the other levels to make them easier to calculate. She pointed out that the actual value of the award should be addressed, due to inflation and increasing cost of university, since the award hasn't been increased since 2011.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND said she doesn't disagree that the award amount should be changed to keep up with the costs of education; however, she said, the higher education investment fund has been "chipped away at" and may not generate additional revenue to cover increases in scholarships, both in award levels and in number of awards.

[9:03:46 AM](#)

MS. EFIRD shared that ACPE reviewed the report and recommendations, and that it hears from students that the dollar amounts of APS are not financially competitive with offers students have received from institutions outside Alaska. She said APS, the Alaska Education Grant, and costs for participation in the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) medical program are all supported by the Higher Education Investment Fund.

[9:05:15 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND said there appears to be general agreement in the need to address recommendations four and 13.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY pointed out that recommendations five and six reflect administrative changes that could be change without changing the statute. She shared the current requirement of 15 credits per semester, for a total of 30 credits for the year, and expressed that a part-time, working student would find that to be a heavy load.

MS. EFIRD deferred to Ms. Thomas.

[9:07:10 AM](#)

KERRY THOMAS, Director of Program Operations, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, proposed changing the "per semester" credits to cumulative credits. She said the goal of the program is to graduate students on time, but the problem students face is the lack of flexibility. Freshman credit requirements is 12 per semester, she said, due to it being the student's first year in college; it then increases to 15 credits per semester. She said students would like flexibility to take additional courses over the summer, or during another time in the program, and "bank" those credits for when courses become more challenging.

[9:10:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked how CTE credit requirements would be adjusted to include those students in that flexibility.

MS. THOMAS replied that she doesn't believe the per-semester credit requirement is applicable to CTE programs.

[9:11:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY continued to recommendation seven, "Increase the number of semesters and years students are allowed to use the award to enable Alaska's high proportion of nontraditional students." She said this would be a statutory change.

[9:11:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX mentioned "circulating the money."

REPRESENTATIVE STORY shared that most students are trying to get through the program as quickly as possible, and that it's helpful for students to have the assurance that they will not lose the award as a result of taking a little longer to finish.

[9:12:49 AM](#)

MS. EFIRD clarified the intent of recommendation seven, which is to maintain the total award, while allowing flexibility for nontraditional students who need to work.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked whether recipients are currently required to expend the award in four years, and she shared her understanding that it's possible to stretch the award to six years.

MS. EFIRD deferred to Ms. Thomas.

[9:14:30 AM](#)

MS. THOMAS clarified that a student currently receives four years of scholarship awards within six years of graduation. She shared that the students most disadvantaged under the current structure are the nontraditional students studying part-time, since the lifetime maximum is eight semesters. If a student is part-time for four years, their lifetime maximum for funding is exhausted without having received the same dollar amount of funding as a student attending four years full-time. She expressed agreement with establishing a dollar amount that could

be equivalent to eight terms at the full-time level, and allowing students to utilize the scholarship within a certain period of time without penalizing students the way they're penalized under the current system.

[9:16:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there is a penalty for not attaining a degree or certificate after having used APS.

MS. THOMAS replied that there are no penalties in terms of repayment, only the inability to receive the remainder of the scholarship. If a student is not on track, she said, they're not eligible for subsequent disbursements.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX expressed the viewpoint that extending the time period during which the scholarship could be used would increase the risk of dropouts. He said, "I don't know what that risk is, but if we extend the time period out, then we have a risk of giving a scholarship to somebody that doesn't deliver. Our expectation, I think, from the ... state's perspective, is that the student completes the program. If they don't, there's some loss to the state."

[9:20:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY expressed the need for balance and flexibility, and for meeting students' needs where they are. She then share recommendation eight, "Eliminate standardized testing requirements," which would be a statutory change. She said key findings show that standardized test requirements are the biggest barrier to APS eligibility, likely due to the cost of the test. She said the state paid the fee for students to take the standardized tests until 2016, which is when APS eligibility peaked.

[9:22:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX agreed that standardized tests are not complete measures of performance.

MS. HAKALA shared the growing body of research that say high school grade point averages (GPAs) are five times stronger than American College Testing (ACT) scores at predicting college graduation. She shared a book called "Crossing the Finish Line: Completing College at America's Public Universities," and she

shared a passage from a Harvard Educational Review of the book, which read as follows:

Another significant contribution of this book is its revelation that the SAT and ACT have little predictive validity for whether or not a student graduates from college or when they leave. With the unique features of their data set, Bowen, Chingos, and McPherson are able to demonstrate that high school GPA is a much stronger predictor of college performance and that the SAT and ACT are largely proxies for high school quality.

MS. HAKALA said requirements for SAT and ACT tests have been waived due to the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, she said, eligibility numbers have increased. Nationally, many universities have suspended the testing requirements and are now considering waiving the requirement long-term, she said.

[9:26:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX said he agrees that other criteria should be considered, but he has concerns with eliminating the testing.

[9:27:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS stated his support for eliminating standardized test score requirements and substituting the standard with a student's academic record, based on the opportunities a student has been able to take advantage of.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX shared his understanding that universities used to have prerequisites in order to register for certain classes.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY agreed that students should be prepared for their time in college, and she opined that academic rigor can still be achieved with flexibility.

[9:29:55 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked what the WorkKeys test is.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY deferred to Ms. Riddle.

[9:30:20 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE explained that WorkKeys was put in place for students who were taking the certificate route instead of the college route for higher education.

[9:31:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY said she appreciated the research on APS with regards to equity and accessibility, noting the disproportionate number of students have not been able to access the scholarship.

[9:32:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY continued her presentation with recommendation nine, "If testing requirements are not eliminated, reestablish state policy requiring and paying for all Alaska high school students to take a standardized test," and recommendation 10, "Consider replacing numerical cut scores with qualitative criteria for establishing cut scores." She pointed out that these two recommendations are statutory. She continued to recommendation 11, "Ensure all students get early and ongoing academic counseling to meet eligibility requirements," which is a mix of administrative and statutory, and recommendation 12, "Include disparity analysis in annual outcomes reports," which is administrative. She directed committee members' attention to page 14 of the McDowell Group report, which discusses regional disparities in qualifications due to access to testing curriculum.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND stated that recommendations 11 and 3 appeal to align in terms of eligibility determinations, and should derive from the same statute.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY agreed.

MS. HAKALA stated that recommendation 11 also directly ties to recommendation 16. She referred to page 20 of the McDowell Group report, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

"As funding decreases, so do these opportunities. A good example of this would be that five years ago we had three counselors and they made regular in-person visits to all our schools, but now we only have one counselor for the entire district."

MS. HAKALA said she knows that counseling has been an area experiencing "severe" cuts due to the eroding purchasing power of foundation funding.

[9:36:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY noted that consideration 13 had already been discussed, and she shared consideration 14, "Alaska's fiscal imbalance has an impact," described on page 10 of the McDowell Group report. She recalled the 2018 veto of APS funding, pointing out that students suddenly didn't know whether they would receive their scholarships, thereby choosing higher education institutions outside Alaska. She then presented consideration 15, "Quality & relevant postsecondary education programs are essential," and she shared that quality, access, and cost are all considered when choosing a program.

[9:40:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK stressed the importance of making students aware of existing programs, and he suggested that the reason students don't join the military is because they don't know there could be educational opportunities.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND pointed out the ACPE website, and she added that loss of counselors hurts students' ability to seek opportunities.

[9:42:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX agreed that programs and opportunities are not well-advertised, and he said that when he was in high school, he didn't know what school counselors were for. He then discussed his nephew, who went to college outside Alaska, and who found that APS is behind what is offered by programs and institutions in the Lower 48. He then asked for information regarding the methodology used in the McDowell Group report.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY agreed that APS needs to be advertised, and she said she doesn't believe people are able to access the ACPE website. She asked how ACPE advertises its programs.

[9:45:42 AM](#)

MS. EFIRD said ACPE sends out letters to eligible students, and she expressed that there are many other ways for ACPE to support

the efforts to ensure students know about opportunities for financial aid.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY added that pages 2-4 of the report detail the methodology of the study. The survey for students eligible for APS was sent to 14,374 graduates via email, with a password-encrypted link to the survey. The response rate was 22 percent, she said. The survey for ineligible students was sent to 32,287 graduates, and the response rate was 9 percent.

[9:48:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said HB 48 is about encouraging students to stay in Alaska for higher education and to begin their careers.

[9:49:35 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND stated HB 48 was held over.

[9:49:59 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.