

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 5, 2023

8:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Jamie Allard, Co-Chair
Representative Justin Ruffridge, Co-Chair
Representative Mike Prax
Representative CJ McCormick
Representative Tom McKay
Representative Rebecca Himschoot
Representative Andi Story

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 148

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

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 139

"An Act relating to funding for correspondence study programs."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 148

SHORT TITLE: AK PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP; ELIGIBILITY

SPONSOR(s): EDUCATION

03/29/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/29/23	(H)	EDC, FIN
04/03/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
04/03/23	(H)	Heard & Held
04/03/23	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/05/23	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

PAUL LAYER, Vice President of Academics, Students, and Research
Academic and Student Affairs
University of Alaska system
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 148.

MAISIE ZUGG, Student
University of Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 148.

AMY BRISTOR, Admissions
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 148.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:00:39 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR JUSTIN RUFFRIDGE called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Representatives Prax, McCormick, McKay, Himschoot, Allard, and Ruffridge were present at the call to order. Representative Story arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 148-AK PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP; ELIGIBILITY

[8:01:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the only order of business would be public testimony on HOUSE BILL NO. 148, "An Act relating to the Alaska performance scholarship program."

[8:01:49 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on HB 148.

[8:02:25 AM](#)

PAUL LAYER, Vice President of Academics, Students, and Research, Academic and Student Affairs, University of Alaska system, testified in support of HB 148. He explained that the proposed legislation would provide significant changes to make the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) program more accessible to students, and more competitive. He highlighted the notification

timeline, which changes from six months to 18 months in the bill. This timing allows for competitiveness with outside institutions, he said. He noted the change to testing barriers, explaining that standardized testing was used by the university for placement, not admission. Increasing the amount of the APS would also allow for financial packages to be created for students to reduce or eliminate the burden of debt.

[8:05:21 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked whether a student who applied for a scholarship would be required to take a placement test to avoid being put into classes above his/her level and possibly losing the scholarship as a result.

MR. LAYER replied that for all students coming in there are multiple placement tools that are used, including the standardized test and the university's own internal test called Accuplacer to assure students are placed in the appropriate programs.

[8:08:29 AM](#)

MAISIE ZUGG, Student, University of Alaska, testified during the hearing on HB 148, and gave her background in academics in Alaska. She stated she would like the APS to be looked at for "a better eligibility of usage."

[8:12:15 AM](#)

AMY BRISTOR, Admissions, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), testified in support of HB 148. She stated she had witnessed the inception of the APS, and the tremendous amount of opportunities it had awarded many students. She opined that the APS had flaws that the bill would help improve. She gave an example of a successful student with a high grade point average (GPA) who did not do well on tests, and believed it was that type of student the bill would help.

[8:16:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Ms. Bristor at what point she started advising students about the APS.

MS. BRISTOR indicated that she had talked to students of all ages about the APS, and encouraged them to pay attention to the scholarship requirements and their GPA.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether there was any kind of notification that high schools or colleges use to remind students to start thinking about the APS.

MS. BRISTOR replied the communications are mostly via email, typically in a student's junior year. In some cases, she said, a high school guidance counselor would begin communications.

[8:19:01 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD discussed a possible amendment that would notify students [about the APS] potentially at the end of freshmen year or beginning of sophomore year. She asked Ms. Bristor whether this would help.

MS. BRISTOR said she was unfamiliar with the amendment, but it sounded like a notification requirement. She said she believed all communications to students and families would help to get the word out.

[8:20:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE relayed that due to technical issues with the phone lines, public testimony on HB 148 would remain open. [He announced that HB 148 was held over.]

[8:21:48 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:22 a.m.