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Press Release

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 13, 2017

Commission Adopts Resolution to Support the Alaska Performance Scholarship and Alaska Education Grants

Juneau – At its April 6, 2017 meeting, the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education voted to approve a resolution that supports the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) and Alaska Education Grant (AEG) programs.

As part of its mission to promote student access to and success in education beyond high school, the Commission is concerned that one of the key incentives for Alaska's students to excel in high school and be prepared for postsecondary and workforce success may be eliminated.

Already into its sixth year, the APS has provided Alaska's high school students an opportunity to earn a scholarship to attend college in Alaska if they push themselves to take a more rigorous curriculum and earn higher grades. With six cohorts having earned the APS, the data clearly show the program is meeting its goals and benefitting students, school districts, and the State's economy as a whole:

- APS users have a 25 percent higher rate of Alaska residency five years after graduation, and 83 percent of APS users say they were influenced by the APS to attend school in Alaska
- APS-eligible students (even those who never use the APS) report the APS made them more likely to work to achieve better grades, take placement exams, seek college or academic advising, and take challenging courses.
- Almost twice as many APS students at UA are prepared for college work and need no remediation, as compared to non-APS students.
- 67 percent of APS students persist into their fourth year at the University of Alaska, compared to only 35 percent of non-APS students, again almost double.

Commission Chair, Joey Crum, describes the APS as “a positive force towards addressing Alaska’s education and workforce goals, making a difference for students, even those who do not get an award, because it encourages all students to reach higher. It makes a difference for schools, which are offering more rigorous curricula to all their students, and for the state as a whole, when it stems the brain drain and helps ensure Alaska residents are trained for Alaska jobs.

“The investment in the next generation of Alaskans is an important one not just for students, but for Alaska’s economy as a whole when we can provide our high school graduates with the incentive to remain in Alaska for college and career training and to contribute to a strong Alaska economy, fueled by an Alaskan workforce. The Commission is pleased and honored to support the APS and the AEG.”

About the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE): The Commission is a 14-member body, the majority of whom are appointed by the governor, with representation from various Alaska higher education constituency groups. Established in 1974, ACPE promotes, supports, and provides access to and success in postsecondary education for Alaskans and in Alaska, through outreach and early awareness, student financial aid, program integrity, and consumer protection programs and services.

About the Alaska Student Loan Corporation (ASLC): ASLC is a public corporation and instrumentality of the State of Alaska, which funds the state education loan programs and administration of Commission functions with tax-exempt bond proceeds and corporation receipts. The Corporation is governed by a five-member board of directors appointed by the governor.

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Resolution of Support of the Alaska Performance Scholarship and Alaska Education Grant

WHEREAS, the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education believes the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) and Alaska Education Grant (AEG) represent tremendous value to Alaska's stakeholders by making the benefits of career and college education more accessible to our students and to our state's economy as a whole with a better educated workforce; and

WHEREAS, since its inception in 2011, the APS demonstrates strong and increasing success as witnessed by the outcomes associated with the program's four key goals developed by the Legislature and the Administration; and

WHEREAS, goal number one is incenting skilled Alaskans to stay in Alaska for school and to contribute to the Alaska workforce and economy. APS users have a 25 percent higher rate of Alaska residency five years after graduation than other high school graduates, and 83 percent of APS users say they were influenced by the APS to attend school in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, goal number two is to incent Alaska students to excel in high school and be prepared for the next step in life. APS-eligible students (even those who qualify but never use it) report the APS made them more likely to work to achieve better grades, take placement exams, seek college or academic advising, and take more challenging courses; and

WHEREAS, goal number three is that Alaska students are better prepared for college and career training. Of the APS students attending the University of Alaska, 74 percent need NO remediation, compared to only 43 percent of non-APS students; and

WHEREAS, goal number four is that Alaska students succeed in college. Only 35 percent of non-APS students persist into their fourth year at the University of Alaska compared to nearly double that number with 67 percent of APS students persisting into their fourth year of study; and

WHEREAS, the APS benefits not only students who receive awards but all Alaska students and districts by incenting school districts to ensure a rigorous curriculum is available to all students, which they have achieved and are maintaining as part of their obligation to ensure their students have the opportunity to strive for the APS; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Labor projects a shortage of over 22,000 trained workers by the end of the decade, and the APS plays an integral role in preventing – rather than reacting to – this crisis by providing our high school graduates with a strong incentive to seek higher education and training here at home; and

WHEREAS, without this incentive to remain in the state, students are much more likely to leave Alaska and not return; and

WHEREAS, by establishing the Alaska Higher Education Investment Fund, the earnings of which are designed to fund the APS and AEG in perpetuity, the Legislature and the Administration made a commitment to Alaska's children that if they worked hard and received good grades, the APS and AEG would be there to help them attend college and career training; and

WHEREAS, the sudden elimination of the APS would hinder the college and career training planning of thousands of Alaskan high school students who are planning to use their APS award to fund their postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, the APS and AEG have helped to fund the postsecondary education of over 32,200 students since 2011; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's secondary and postsecondary students, parents, teachers, and employers value the APS and AEG, and support their continuation so all Alaskans can reap the benefits of an Alaskan grown workforce; and

WHEREAS, the APS and AEG are not just investments in Alaska's students; they are investments in Alaska's schools and districts, Alaska's economic health, and Alaska's future.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education strongly supports the continuation of the Alaska Performance Scholarship and the Alaska Education Grant.

Signed by members in attendance at the April 6, 2017 meeting:

Joey Crum, Chair
Proprietary Education
President and Chief Executive Officer
Northern Industrial Training

Pat Jacobson, Vice Chair
General Public

Dale Anderson
Board of Regents
Senior Resident Director, Merrill Lynch

Dr. Eric Ash
Private Higher Education
Dean, Wayland Baptist University

Dr. Pearl Brower
Community Colleges
President, Ilisagvik College

Colby Freel
Student Representative
Chair, Coalition of Student Leaders

Dr. Keith Hamilton
State Board of Education
President, Alaska Christian College

Rebecca Huggins
General Public
Principal, American Charter Academy

Kurt Kuhne
Alaska Workforce Investment Board

Les Morse
General Public

Lisa Parker
Board of Regents
President, Parker Horn Company

Randy Weaver
General Public
Chief Finance Officer, Denali State Bank

ADOPTED April 6, 2017