

Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force

Recommendation Proposed by Gary Wilken

August 1-2, 2007

Other Issues – Alaska Military Youth Academy

Issue Summary: In 2002, Representative Eldon Mulder proposed an amendment in the House Finance Committee that tied the funding for the Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA) to the student dollar within the foundation formula. Testimony before the committee indicated that the new funding plan would be almost revenue neutral, with only a slight increase over the previous dollar amount appropriated to AMYA.

Under the ultimately adopted change, AMYA receives funding at 7 times the Base Student Allocation for each full-time student and .6 times the per student dollar for AMYA graduates who participate in a year-long mentoring program. A one-day student count period was established as October 1 of the preceding school year.

Recommendation: The Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force noted several concerns regarding the current funding formula for the Alaska Military Youth Academy and formally requests that the appropriate House and Senate legislative committees review the present method used to determine state support for the academy. The appropriate committees shall prepare and introduce legislation, if needed, to address concerns discussed during the committee process.

Discussion: Between FY99 and FY03 the increase to the base student allocation was only \$70, but from FY03 to FY08 the individual allocation jumped \$1,370. As a result of this increase to the “per student dollar,” the Alaska Military Youth Academy received a substantial increase in state funding.

The one day student count period (as opposed to the 20-day count period of Alaska’s 53 school districts) has the potential to inflate AMYA student enrollment figures. The FY07 enrollment numbers indicate that 28% of the students counted for state funding withdrew from the program after a two week

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period. Acknowledging the growth in state funding for AMYA, the legislature reduced the academy's operating budget by \$2,525,000 in FY08.

The current funding formula for AMYA needs to be thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate legislative committees and changes recommended, if necessary.