

## **Exit Exam is a Cost-Effective, Necessary Tool for High School**

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A recent letter asked why we need a high school exit exam. Passing a course doesn't necessarily mean mastery of the course material anymore. The business community found they couldn't find qualified entry-level employees among applicants with high school diplomas. The University found freshmen could not function at high school level, and spends significant amounts of money on remediation. This was the result of low expectations and a lack of accountability. The exit exam now establishes that accountability.

The test is supported by Alaskans throughout the state because it reflects the basic skills everyone needs for life after school. Not all students will pass the test the first time. However, this provides students, teachers, and parents the opportunity to base further instruction on individual strengths and weaknesses. The result will be graduates ready for life after school.

As the state spends nearly three quarters of a billion dollars on our public schools, the \$20 per student invested in the high school exit exam is a reasonable investment that will encourage accountability for the money we spend in our schools and spur greater student achievement. The test also helps us meet federal law that requires a statewide test of reading, writing, and math skills between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

The high school exit exam is an important, fair, and effective step in improving our public education.

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