

February 6, 2014

Governor Sean Parnell  
Alaska State Capitol Building  
Third Floor  
PO Box 110001  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Governor Parnell;

I am writing in support of full funding for the Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP) House Bill 238 Senate Bill 139. I have lived and worked in the Northwest Arctic region of Alaska for the past 33 years. I am a retired teacher the father of 6 and currently run the Maniilaq Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation program. Our region needs a motivated, educated workforce, the Alaska Technical Center is a major component to seeing that this is realized.

As a father I have experienced firsthand the changes that ATC has made possible for my son who experiences a disability. He was able to work towards and earned his GED last February. The attention that he received at the Tech center in Kotzebue by the staff helped build his self-concept and propelled him into a positive forward momentum. Since receiving his GED he has gone on to earn certification as a Core Driller Helper, has completed the 14 week Millwright certification program and is currently enrolled in the Construction trades class. He also expects to participate in a Driver's Education program soon. Coming from a small village it was important for him to be able to have a setting close enough to home and connected to our region so that he could participate in home life and also to engage in subsistence activities. He will soon be 20 years old and is feeling confident that the training and experiences that he has gained as a result of the programs that ATC offers will give him the advantage as he begins his job search this spring.

I have also had the opportunity to work closely with the Administration and the Staff of the ATC as the Program Supervisor for the Maniilaq Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The MTVR program offers support to tribal members who experience disabilities that present barriers to employment. I have found that the staff at the tech center has been very



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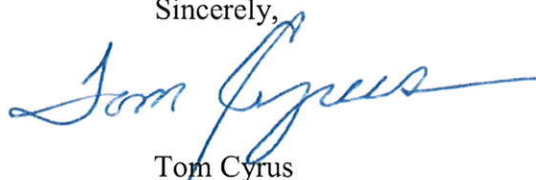
Tom Cyrus, Program Supervisor  
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accommodating and receptive to working with tribal members with disabilities to provide them a level playing field when it comes to vocational training and opportunity. The tech center has an atmosphere that lends itself to providing support to all of its students, meeting them where they are and helping them reach their educational goals and as a result achieving an employment outcome.

One of the major strengths of the Alaska Technical Center is its location. Kotzebue is the hub of our region and feels like home. With its easy access students do not feel left out of family and subsistence activities. It is also easy for family members to stay connected as they travel in to Kotzebue from the villages. The well trained staff is knowledgeable and has practical experiences in their respective fields from Mining, Construction, Office Occupations, and Health related fields. This knowledge and experience easily translates to the students that what they are learning in class has a direct correlation to what they will be doing at the workplace. The Administration also works closely with local employers and organizations so that the programs offered are what is needed for the local market.

The Alaska Technical Center is an important component in the NW Arctic region to provide lifelong learning to our people. As a state we need to continue to support it by providing funding to ensure workforce development. I certainly encourage you as Governor to support the efforts of the Tech Center and demonstrate that support by providing full funding for the Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP) House Bill 238 Senate Bill 139. Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,



Tom Cyrus



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