



Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center

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To: Honorable Representative Harriet Drummond
RE: HB221 – Workforce and Education Related Statistics Program

The Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center in Nome, also known as NACTEC, is a Regional Training Center with a primary student population served from the 15 villages of Bering Strait School District surrounding Nome, as well as Nome Public Schools. NACTEC delivers over 25 unique vocational training programs annually, in a variable term format, to communities that would otherwise be without the diversity of programs delivered in a short duration intensive format.

The administration of a statewide workforce and education-related statistics program would be of value for NACTEC, as well as entities providing funding in support of our training programs and operations. As a Regional Training Center it is not uncommon to report on placement into employment with outcome measures 7 to 12 months following training. For programs serving primarily high school students, such measures neglect to account for the impact of training on keeping students engaged and in school. 75%-80% of our high school training population is enrolled in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grade. Employment measures 7-12 months after training can unintentionally disregard ¾'s of a training population and present a skewed view of success of training.

Across rural Alaska dropout rates tend to track disproportionately higher, just as graduation rates track lower. A measure of persistence would shed light on the value of programs that are keeping students engaged and on the path to graduation. HB221 presents a tool for measurement purposes through the K-12 years, tracking to post-secondary and thereafter into employment. This would be of value to determine how a coherent sequence of vocational courses can begin at a Jr. High Career Exploration level, leading to certificated Career Immersion courses in the 12th grade, leading directly into employment or as the linkage to post-secondary continuation.

Here at NACTEC we would find value in longitudinal measures that HB221 would present the opportunity to capture. For the purpose of student protection, a tool that protects personally identifiable information, while utilizing aggregate comparisons would be of value. HB221 proposes to do this and could provide outcome measures of enhanced value over some currently applied outcome measures.

Respectfully,

Douglas J. Walrath, Director