

May 7, 2008

Today the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) has released a report entitled *Making Alaska More Competitive by Preparing Citizens for College and Career*. The report contains Alaska's recent high school dropout rates related to ninth graders, as well as the percentage who successfully complete a collegiate program of study within 150 percent of the regular time to complete. These statistics show Alaska at the bottom in educational performance indicators in the nation. For every 50 ninth graders, 31 graduate from high school; 14 go to college; nine return for their sophomore year; and only three receive a degree within six years.

The report was written by Dr. Ron Phipps of the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington, D.C. In conjunction with the report's development, ACPE partnered with the National College Access Network to survey various stakeholders to better understand the postsecondary access and success climate in Alaska. The major findings of this research are: 1) a college-going culture does not exist in Alaska; and, 2) the relationship between Alaska's workforce needs and postsecondary education is not widely recognized.

Making Alaska More Competitive provides compelling evidence that improving access to and participation and success in postsecondary programs, both collegiate and vocational, is key to a strong future for Alaska and her citizens. It also outlines several recommendations and potential strategies for improving educational outcomes in Alaska, and helping students acquire the knowledge and ability to succeed in postsecondary education and in their careers.

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