



ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

2012 ANNUAL CONVENTION

12-44

ALASKA FEDERATION  
OF NATIVES

- TITLE:** EXPANDING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL EDUCATION AND LOCAL PROGRAMS
- WHEREAS:** The statewide 2011 Alaska Native high school 4 year graduation rate is 50.07;  
and
- WHEREAS:** Of the 131 small high schools, 93 have 30 or fewer students; and
- WHEREAS:** Of the 2,662 students in small high schools, 95.38% are Alaska Native students;  
and
- WHEREAS:** Almost 1,000 students participate in residential programs of different types throughout the state, and different regions are developing regional programs that fit their needs and circumstance; and
- WHEREAS:** State policies have had a negative impact on small high schools and urban schools have very poor performance with regard to Alaska Native students; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska Native students learn in a variety of places, from small rural schools in the villages, to large urban schools in the cities, and distant boarding academies; and
- WHEREAS:** Each type of school has its own strengths and weaknesses. Though rural schools often are not provided the same resources as urban schools, they teach things that urban ones do not and they permit our youth to remain with their families and help ensure the continued vitality of our people, our homes, and our cultures; and
- WHEREAS:** Regardless of where one attends school, education is the foundation of opportunities for Alaska Natives and for all peoples; and
- WHEREAS:** Quality education should therefore be available to all who want it; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska Natives have suffered discrimination and disparities in education, which, as recognized by the courts, has persisted to today; and
- WHEREAS:** Several programs throughout the state have had excellent results with short term, medium term and long term programs that connect rural and urban Alaska Native students with opportunities to advance their education; and

- WHEREAS The current Alaska law only authorizes statewide residential programs through school districts to be eligible for state residential stipends; and
- WHEREAS: It is essential that Alaska Native organizations operate educational programs for Alaska Native students to advance their opportunities; and
- WHEREAS: The current stipend does not meet the operational cost needs of programs currently under operation; and
- WHEREAS: Residential Learning Centers provide one option and offer the following benefits:
- Student access to short- and long-term courses and programs that small high schools are unable to deliver;
  - State education funding would remain in a student's home district or region.
  - Collaboration on course delivery and cost sharing;
  - Student access to technical centers, university campuses, job shadowing, and apprenticeships;
  - Year-round course delivery;
  - Increased opportunities for Performance Scholarship Program, CTE programs, social and service learning; and

NOW BE IT RESOLVED by the Delegates to the 2012 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. (AFN), that AFN works with the Governor, his Administration, and the Alaska Legislature to rename 4 AAC 33.090 as follows: District-operated or non-profit operated residential programs that deliver in-district, regional, or statewide residential educational programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AFN advocate to amend language in 4 AAC 33.090 to include in-district and regional residential educational programs as well as statewide residential educational programs, and that Alaska Native organizations are required to lead or partner with such programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AFN advocate to amend language in 4 AAC 33.090 to provide student stipend funding to approved in-district and regional residential educational programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State of Alaska establish in regulation an annual application period for districts wishing to establish a district, regional, or statewide residential school in compliance with 4 AAC 33.090; and

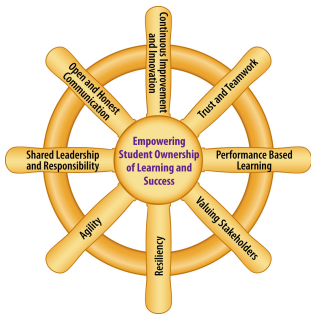
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the current stipend be increased by at least 50% to adequately reflect the costs associated with operating residential programs; and

BE IT FINALLY FURTHER RESOLVED that AFN partner with individuals, groups, and other organizations that also believe in educational equality to ensure that Alaska Native Organizations are driving the residential programs for the benefit of Alaska Native students.

SUBMITTED BY: BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

CONVENTION ACTION: PASSED





# Chugach School District

9312 Vanguard Drive, Suite 100

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[chugachschools.com](http://chugachschools.com)



Date: February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
To: Honorable Representative Lynn Gattis  
From: Superintendent Bob Crumley, Ph.D., Chugach School District  
Re: HB 291 – Residential School Stipend Increase Support

As an operator of a Variable-Term Residential Learning Center for 18 years, the Chugach School District would like to submit **testimony in support of HB 291**. We applaud this forward thinking proposed legislation. HB 291 proposes to invest in what is already in place and has already proven effective and successful.

Nearly two decades ago, the Chugach School District embarked upon an effort to overcome the many barriers to our youth acquiring a quality education. We emphasized the successful transition from K-12 to careers and post secondary training. Our communities and business partners provided ample input in this process, and CSD acted upon their input. This led to the development of our performance-based education system where learning is the constant, and time is the variable. As well, the input led to our development of the first variable term residential program we call the Voyage To Excellence, or VTE. Funded primarily through competitive grants, we've spent years developing a significant network of education and business partners who are key to helping students succeed. From construction and health care to oil and hospitality, and everything in-between, business partners have consistently informed us that employability skills, life skills and technical skills are as equally important as academics when it comes to hiring today's youth. We listened to them. We embedded their input into our reformed educational system.

The result is a very successful, holistic educational program that helps students understand the value of learning. Now, rather than avoiding or resisting school and learning, VTE students voluntarily seek out learning. This includes participation during regular school days as well as summer vacations and weekends. VTE students choose to participate because they know the learning is relevant and key to their future success. Partnering with other school districts, VTE now serves students from around our state.

Community input and student need were the driving force for the development of our variable-term residential school. VTE is an Alaskan grass roots developed program, designed specifically to simultaneously meet Alaskan youth and business partner needs. It has been successfully doing so for 18 years. As the operator of this program, we know the following:

- We know the overwhelming student need for these relevant learning opportunities across Alaska
- We know how to successfully build such a program
- We know how to successfully operate such a program
- We know what it takes to sustain such a program
- We know the value and benefits VTE provides for each individual student
- We know the positive impact VTE has upon schools when students return to their local school
- We know the value VTE provides for Alaska (from financial & economical to social & health benefits)



Whittier Community School  
(907) 472-2575

Tatitlek Community School  
(907) 325-2252

Chenega Bay Community School  
(907) 573-5123

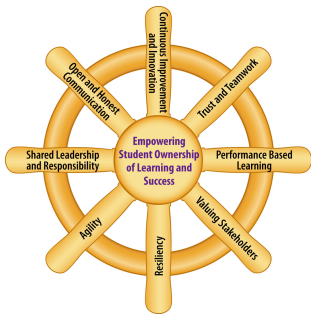
Valdez FOCUS  
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Voyage to  
Excellence  
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# Chugach School District

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Building VTE outside of state support was a challenge to say the least. Sustaining VTE for the long term is proving to be an even greater challenge. A recent legislative appropriation to expand our VTE facilities is deeply appreciated, and students from around Alaska are already benefiting from it today. To meet the ongoing challenge of sustaining the VTE School, the Chugach School District applied for and became designated as a statewide residential school. The HB 291 proposed increase to the residential school stipend is key to our ability to sustain these essential student services for Alaskan youth and businesses. This increase should in no way be considered a hand out but rather should be considered a leg up for the youth and businesses of Alaska.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input and for your support of HB 291.

Sincerely,

Bob Crumley, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
Chugach School District



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CITCI.org

February 7, 2014

The Honorable Lynn Gattis  
The Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 420  
Juneau AK, 99801-1182

Dear Representative Gattis,

Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) strongly supports HB 291, which will provide a critical increase to the current stipend for residential programs operated in conjunction with a school district. CITC's Dena'ina Academy is a residential educational collaboration between the Anchorage School District(ASD) and the Cook Inlet Tribal Council(CITC) designed to provide academically motivated Alaska Native high school students who lack stable, supportive living environment with a structured and supervised living situation that supports the students as they achieve their full academic potential. In this collaboration, ASD provides the academic components and CITC provides the residential components through its Dena'ina Academy.

Dena'ina Academy provides a safe, stable housing option built on a foundation of Alaska Native culture for students who choose to finish school. The vision is that the youth who live in Dena'ina Academy graduate from high school, with a strong sense of themselves, firmly based in their cultural identity and capable of achieving either college or vocations of their choice. Our goal is to prepare them as leaders and ambassadors of their culture moving forward in an increasingly complex world. The program operations and philosophy purposefully include and teach the values that all Alaska Native people share, and is grounded in the Dena'ina culture, while providing meaningful connection for each student to their own cultural traditions and family members where appropriate.

CITC and ASD currently collaborate to provide academic programs for Alaska Native students in these two high schools, serving hundreds of students. CITC's students in the last academic year graduated at 91% in contrast to overall Alaska Native students at around 50%. CITC is responsible for the year-round operations of the Dena'ina Academy residence itself and ASD provides the educational curriculum accessed through its High Schools.

Dena'ina Academy:

- **Provides essential supports to achieve academic success for students who otherwise would be at risk of failure, optimizing ASD programs.**
- **ASD provides the academic and school support programs, school-based extra-curriculars etc, and is thus integrally involved in the program on the academic/school side.**
- CITC provides the residential and social supports, including room, board and supervision, FAB Lab, access to CITC youth programs, specialized Native leadership curriculum, community service opportunities, etc.
- Dena'ina Academy serves students who fall through the cracks because they are not failing and may not be eligible for other social services but are still in danger of dropping out due to inability to get to school or have a place of safety with healthy foods and help with schoolwork, who may be couch-surfing or otherwise find housing instability a barrier to academic success.
- Dena'ina Academy optimizes ASD academic programs through its staff:
  - a House Parent who is fully engaged in their daily lives - providing structure and support as a parent would; communicating with ASD on student progress and needs or any concerns;
  - a House Elder who provides a lifeline that integrates cultural knowledge and another adult who will give advice.
  - Counselors fill another adult interaction role for social needs/issues, support to the House Parent & House Elder
  - All coordinate with the advocate at ASD working toward academic goals and implementation of educational plans for each student.
- Numbers coming in from rural Alaska are not decreasing, and this program presents a win-win for the ASD.
- Dena'ina Academy will serve up to 40 students in small family-style homes in Anchorage.

The increase provided in HB 291 will more adequately defray the costs of housing students in our programs and will allow CITC to leverage other funds in a public/private partnership that brings new opportunities for academic success to Alaska Native students.

Please feel free to contact me with further questions.

Sincerely,



Gloria O'Neill  
President/CEO

# GALENA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

GALENA, ALASKA 99741

PHONE (907) 656-1205

FAX (907) 656-2238

**SUPERINTENDENT**

Chris Reitan



Re: HB 291 – An Act Increasing the Stipend for Boarding School Students

Dear House Education Committee;

I'm writing this letter in support of HB 291 – An Act Increasing the Stipend for Boarding School Students. Galena City School District is in its 18<sup>th</sup> year of operating the Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA) on the vacated Galena Air Force Base. GILA is a statewide boarding facility for students seeking choice. It is Alaska's 2<sup>nd</sup> longest operating boarding school and offers students industry-standard certifications in aviation and cosmetology; students can also receive university credit (dual credit) in carpentry, welding, aviation, automotive, computer technology, health sciences and culinary arts courses through tech prep agreements with the University of Alaska Fairbanks. GILA provides access for rural Alaskan students to CTE and academic course offerings that are unaffordable to smaller schools, and allows students to develop the skills necessary to transition to a college path, vocational post-secondary path, or directly to the work force upon graduation. Currently, GILA is serving 211 students from over 70 communities, most of them rural and remote, and over 92% of the students are Alaska Native.

Galena City School District appreciates the support the Alaska legislature has provided district operated boarding schools. Beginning in 2006 the legislature provided additional funding through **Alaska Statute Sec. 14.16.200 State funding for districts operating statewide residential educational programs** to offset our room and board costs and to provide students state-wide more educational choices. At the end of the spring 2013 legislative session the monthly per pupil room and board stipend that a school district can receive for each student housed in a statewide residential educational program was doubled from what was originally outlined in statute. For Galena City School District this legislative action doubled the amount that the district receives per month for each student from \$592 to \$1184. GCSD is extremely appreciative for this funding; however this funding still falls short of providing the necessary funds to offset the true costs of operating a boarding school facility. GCSD respectfully requests your support for HB 291 – An Act Increasing the Stipend for Boarding School Students. HB 291 adjusts Sec. 14.16.200 to a dollar amount that a district can receive for room and board costs that more accurately reflects the true costs of housing and feeding our high school boarding school students. Attached to this letter is a spreadsheet that outlines GILA's residence life costs for FY 13 and our anticipated costs for FY 14 that provides a clearer picture of the revenues that GCSD currently receives from Sec. 14.16.200 and our expenditures associated with operating a 24/7 residence life facility.

In closing, GCSD thanks the Alaska legislature for your previous generous support of high school boarding school programs that provide many rural Alaskan students an alternative education that is unavailable in their home communities. We also thank you in advance for your consideration of HB 291.

Yours in Education,

Chris Reitan, GCSD Superintendent

Email: [chris.reitan@galenanet.com](mailto:chris.reitan@galenanet.com)



## Galena Interior Learning Academy



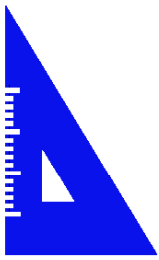
Two Seasons Dining Hall



Ptarmigan Hall

### Residence Life Revenues and Expenditures for FY 13 and FY 14

	Actual FY 13 based on 210 Students	Estimated FY 14 based on 210 Students
<b>Revenue</b>		
Statewide Residential Educational Program	2,364,702.00	2,398,194.00
Local Sources - food services	1,750.00	1,750.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,366,452.00</b>	<b>2,399,944.00</b>
<b>Total Revenue Per Student</b>	<b>11,268.82</b>	<b>11,428.30</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Certificated Salaries	150,544.00	91,500.00
Non-certificated Salaries	1,120,894.00	1,102,472.00
Employee Benefits	600,223.00	626,944.00
Transportation Allowance	25,665.00	21,700.00
Professional and Technical Services	19,327.00	25,000.00
Staff Travel	4,346.00	3,500.00
Student Travel	492,348.00	550,000.00
Utility Services	384,739.00	449,169.00
Energy	339,550.00	208,000.00
Other Purchased Services	1,190.00	1,100.00
Supplies, materials and media	635,532.00	651,735.00
Tuition and Stipends	59,385.00	63,000.00
Equipment	6,350.00	5,000.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>3,840,093.00</b>	<b>3,799,120.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditures Per Student</b>	<b>18,286.16</b>	<b>18,091.05</b>
<b>Total Shortage Funding</b>	<b>1,473,641.00</b>	<b>1,399,176.00</b>
<b>Shortage Funding Per Student</b>	<b>7,017.34</b>	<b>6,662.74</b>
<b>Percent Shortage of Funding Per Student</b>	<b>38.38%</b>	<b>36.83%</b>



**NORTHWESTERN  
ALASKA CAREER  
AND TECHNICAL  
CENTER**

## Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center

Douglas J. Walrath, PhD  
P.O. Box 131  
Nome, AK 99762  
Tel: 907-443-3507  
Fax: 907-443-7076  
<http://www.nacteonline.org>

February 6, 2014

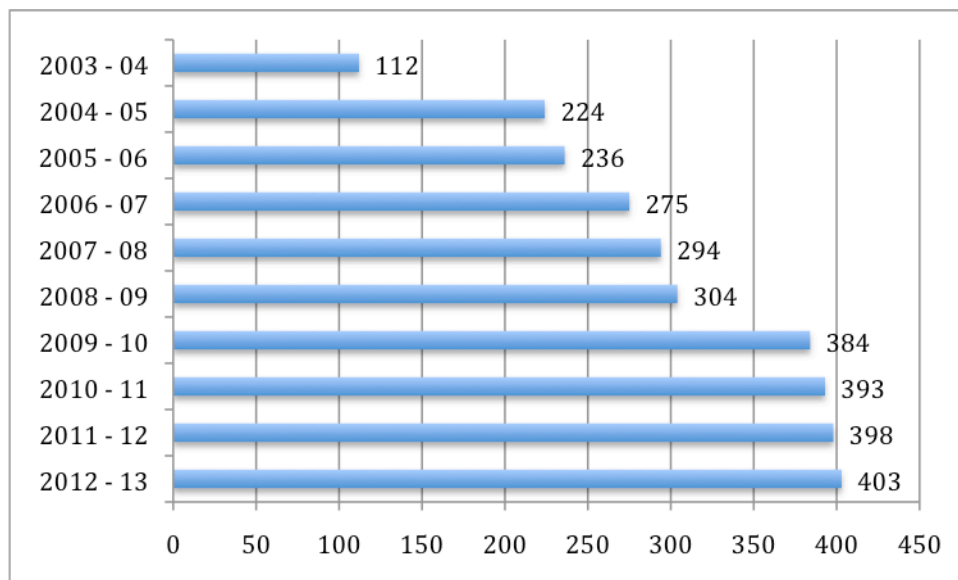
To: Representative Gattis, House Education Committee

RE: Residential Schools Stipend

Dear Representative Gattis,

The Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC) supports efforts with House Bill 291 to increase the stipend for boarding school students. Variable term residential facilities, of the NACTEC sort, are providing opportunities for students to access vocational training programs, while learning the necessary life skills and career skills to succeed in the workplace, that simply do not exist in villages across the remote outreaches of Alaska.

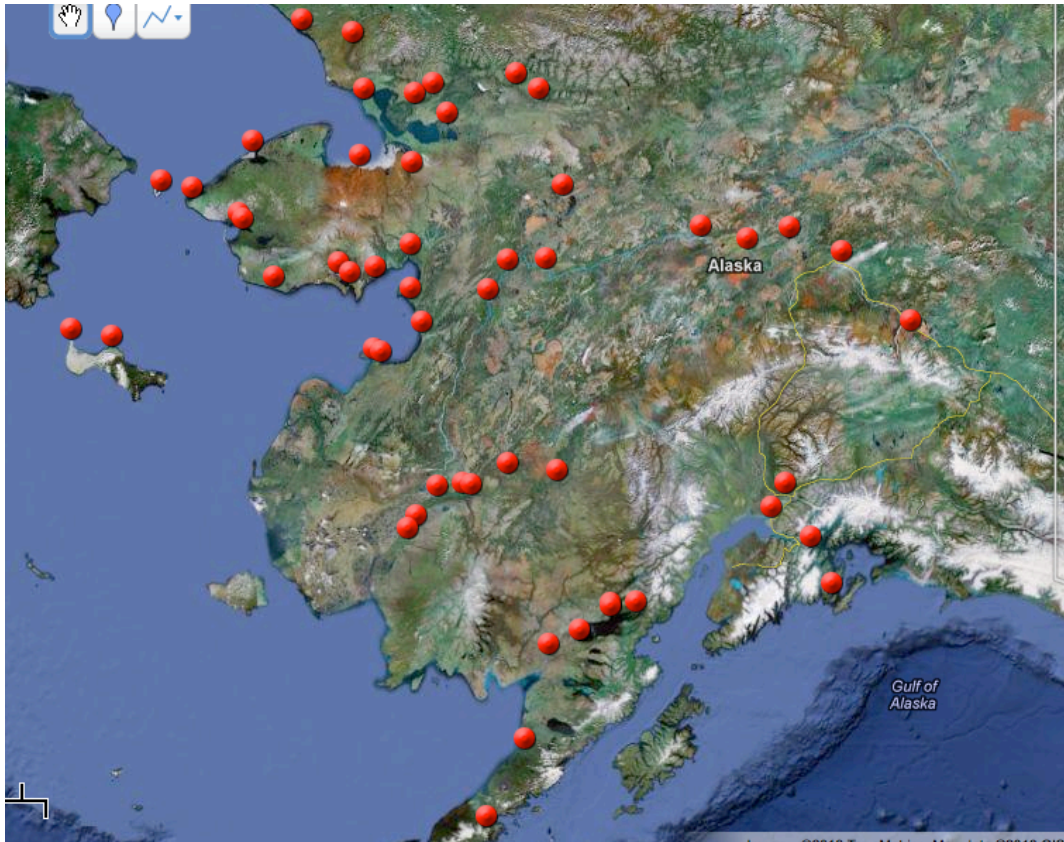
NACTEC, a Regional Training Center located in Nome, is a good example of the interest in a variable term residential program, endorsed at the local level, and without the stigma of boarding schools that elders may recall from the past. Since inception in 2003, NACTEC has experienced a steadily increasing student training population every year (see graph). Over 3000 trainees from 50 rural villages have completed Career and Technical Education training courses at NACTEC in the past decade.



The double-edged sword of delivering vocational training programs is that the costs of housing, transporting, and training students continues to increase with the popularity of programs reaching more trainees. Increasing energy costs and travel costs are impacting our ability to serve the maximum number of students. So as to meet

student demand in our programs, we have aggressively pursued industry partnership to help sustain training costs associated with our enrollment growth. Over the past five years we've secured industry support, utilizing education tax credits, which supported 27% of the operational costs over this time frame.

We are thankful of the industry partners who have stepped forward to keep our programs running at current capacity over the past five years. The disadvantage of relying so heavily on industry support, is that funding tends to ebb and flow with the economy. The stability of reliable funding sources, such as that deriving from HB 291, brings with it the ability for multi-year programming. This leads to the ability to build stronger programs and reach more students.



In just ten years students from 50 rural villages have been served at NACTEC. As depicted in the map above, there is tremendous potential to meet the needs of student populations who've been disadvantaged to resources and opportunities based on the remoteness of home. HB 291 would address this issue. NACTEC supports the efforts behind HB 291, as it will make a tremendous impact for many disadvantaged students across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Doug J. Walrath', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Douglas J. Walrath, NACTEC Director

Cc:

- Mike Hanley, Commissioner Department of Education and Early Development
- Representative Neal Foster
- Senator Donald Olson

**Nenana City Public School**  
**PO Box 10 Nenana, AK 99760**

Phone: (907) 832-5464/Fax: (907) 832-5625

*"A Community of Opportunity - Preparing Students for Life"*

February 7, 2014

Representative Lynn Gattis  
State Capitol  
Room 420  
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB 291

Dear Representative Gattis,

Thank you for your introduction and support of HB 291, "An Act increasing the stipend for boarding school students; and providing for an effective date." The school board, administration, and staff of the Nenana City School District fully support the passage of this bill. Currently, in order to house, supervise, and feed the student residents of the Nenana Student Living Center, the school district has to transfer funding from the *School Operating Fund* to meet the expenses of caring for students. HB 291 will significantly reduce that required transfer, which will allow more funding to remain for its intended purpose, educating students.

The Nenana Student Living Center has been in operation since 2001. For the 2013-2014 school year, the Nenana Student Living Center was at capacity, eighty-eight students who represented thirty-four different communities. The school district and the Nenana community have supported increasing the per student stipend for boarding school students in a multi-year, multi-session effort. We are pleased by the support we are finding during this session. The passage of HB 291 will result in greater educational opportunity for all students in Alaska.

Please contact me if you have any questions or if you have further need of information. HB 291 is an important bill to the Nenana City School District and we stand ready to help, so that students and their parents can have choices in acquiring the education that will best meet their individual needs.

Sincerely,



Eric Gebhart  
Superintendent

supt@nenanalynx.org

"providing all students with the tools and learning environment necessary to commit to achieving success"