



# Anchorage School District

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## Education Center

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January 31, 2022

Rep. Ken McCarty  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 428  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative McCarty,

As superintendent of Alaska's largest school district, I am writing today to offer support for House Bill 108: Concurrent Secondary & Trade School.

As the state and nation continue to grapple with massive skilled employee shortages and an aging workforce, it is more critical than ever to support policies that increase equitable access to Career & Technical Education (CTE). In Alaska and across the nation, CTE has a proven record of preparing students for success in life after high school.

Data show that students who matriculate through CTE programs have higher graduation rates and increased economic mobility, often with zero or minimum post-secondary debt. Alaskan industries such as healthcare, oil & gas, mining, maritime, and construction are dependent on highly skilled employees whose wage growth is outpacing other industries.

Yet, Alaska faces challenges in meeting the demand for a technically skilled workforce. Many school districts lack the human and financial capital to fund dedicated CTE instructors with the necessary qualifications to teach highly skilled classes in the trades, information technology, healthcare, and construction.

This challenge will continue to grow as infrastructure bills move forward through the Federal Administration that pave the way for expanded investment in Alaska's infrastructure. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has strained our healthcare resources and exacerbated the need for trained medical professionals across the state.

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*Educating All Students for Success in Life*

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HB 108 allows a policy that aims to help our state bridge the gap between available training resources and secondary school students. By providing access to a curated list of vetted, concurrent technical training programs, students and districts can identify training opportunities which align with students' career interest areas.

In addition, HB 108 will allow expanded access to work-based learning programs such as on-the-job training, which is a mark of high quality CTE programs. Such training and other work-based learning experiences will allow students to gain valuable training that cannot be replicated in the classroom.

ASD supports HB 108 as it will enhance opportunities for students. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.  
Superintendent