

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 31, 2011

8:01 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Alan Dick, Chair  
Representative Lance Pruitt, Vice Chair  
Representative Eric Feige  
Representative Paul Seaton  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative Sharon Cissna (via teleconference)  
Representative Scott Kawasaki

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION(S): SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

- HEARD

OVERVIEW(S): ALASKA CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PLAN

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

DR. STEVE ATWATER, Superintendent  
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented an overview of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

GUY BELL, Assistant Commissioner  
Office of the Commissioner  
Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented an overview and answered questions about the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan.

FRED VILLA, Associate Vice President  
Workforce Programs  
Academic Affairs and Research  
University of Alaska (UA)  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented an overview and answered questions about the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan.

CYNDY CURRAN, Director  
Teaching and Learning Support  
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented an overview and answered questions about the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:01:56 AM](#)

**CHAIR ALAN DICK** called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Representatives Dick, Pruitt, Feige, Seaton, Wilson, Kawasaki, and Cissna (via teleconference) were present at the call to order.

#### **PRESENTATION(S): SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT**

[8:04:06 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the first order of business would be a presentation by the Superintendent of the Kenai Peninsula School District.

[8:05:46 AM](#)

DR. STEVE ATWATER, Superintendent, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, stated that the home school program operated solely for students within the school district. He reported that although attendance had decreased to its lowest level ever, an increase was projected for the following school year. He opined that the district had the widest array of school types within Alaska. He noted that the students' scores compared well with other schools around Alaska, which he attributed to the experienced teachers and the community support. The community provided the travel funds for students to compete in music, sports and other activities throughout the state. He observed

that the teacher evaluation process determined the effectiveness of the teachers. He expressed the challenges for the district to be the wide distribution of the schools, the economies of scale for small schools, and the level of funding. He shared his goal of moving the school district from "good" to "excellent." He stressed a need for the schools to more tightly align their efforts in order to improve. He explained that the "tight-loose-tight organizational structure" was being implemented. The initial "tight" would standardize conduct of business, process of intervention, and purchases, and the final "tight" would define the outcome and determination of attainment for the schools and students. He pointed out that, between these "tight" end points, the "loose" pieces would allow each school to have its own identity. He offered his belief that this strategy would allow them to become an excellent school district.

[8:11:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON reflected on the student advisor models that had been voluntarily incorporated into six of the district high schools, and the corresponding increase in graduation rates. He asked if the school district planned to implement the programs in every school.

DR. ATWATER replied that although the advisories were not yet mandatory, more schools were implementing the model.

[8:12:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON observed that the data indicated this was the most effective statewide program for increasing graduation rates, and he requested any further analysis of the program. He asked what would replace the highly successful natural resources course, and if that replacement curriculum would keep students as engaged.

DR. ATWATER replied that the district was reducing and planned to replace the program with basic science courses. He acknowledged a pressure to replace the program, and that the district hoped to do so in the future.

[8:14:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked about the effects of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) on the school district.

DR. ATWATER confirmed that NCLB focuses on testing, with some restriction of curriculum; however, he endorsed the benefits for the expanded use of data analysis. He declined to label NCLB as "all bad."

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked if it had improved the outcome from the school district.

DR. ATWATER offered his belief that basic skills were attained at a better rate under NCLB, but that "educating the whole child" was not so successful.

[8:16:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON reflected that the "tight-loose-tight" philosophy allowed more educational latitude, and could be incorporated as an aspect of NCLB.

DR. ATWATER, in response to Representative P. Wilson, said that staff motivation was his primary focus. He observed that forced compliance dulled their motivation and creativity. He expressed a need to allow teachers the flexibility of teaching to their strengths and the students interests, while meeting certain educational targets. He affirmed that his district demographics were diverse and this was a key to the success of this district.

[8:18:56 AM](#)

**OVERVIEW(S): Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan**

[8:19:29 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be an overview of the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan (CTE), presented by the Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD), Department of Education and Early Development (EED), and the University of Alaska (UA).

[8:20:58 AM](#)

GUY BELL, Assistant Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Labor & Workforce Development, pointed to the need for a seamless transition from school to the labor force. He addressed the DLWD report, "Nonresidents Working in Alaska," which discussed the profile of jobs throughout the state, stating that the key to filling the jobs by Alaskans was to prepare the in-state talent.

[8:25:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked about the percentage of decrease.

MR. BELL, in response to Representative P. Wilson, said that, historically, the percentage of resident to nonresident jobs had been an up and down curve.

[8:26:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE requested a copy of the report, and asked if there were any differentiation for people hired as Alaska residents who then moved, and if it addressed the qualifications for particular jobs.

MR. BELL replied that it was difficult to track people who had moved, as the report was based on new hire data. He shared that the required training, certification, or credential for each occupation was included in the report.

[8:27:50 AM](#)

FRED VILLA, Associate Vice President, Workforce Programs, Academic Affairs and Research, University of Alaska, introduced the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan (CTE) [Included in members' packets]. He expressed agreement with the committee orientation for reading, writing, arithmetic, and relevance. He stated that CTE was committed to relevance. He introduced the members of the CTE plan taskforce.

[8:31:00 AM](#)

MR. VILLA gave a brief background for the plan, noting that it was the product of an educational summit in 2009, and that the summit outcomes included that Alaska should: have world class schools; develop the community culture; and maintain a vision for student health and safety. He referenced the commitment between EED and DLWD "to work together and lead the development of a career and technical education plan." He emphasized that this was a working plan, continually undergoing implementation. He affirmed that the principles of the plan declared that it be inclusive and accessible for all students in every area of the state, and comprehensive for all levels of education and career opportunities. These principles required a great amount of coordination, collaboration, and cooperation by the departments. He declared that six strategies encapsulated the CTE plan.

[8:35:30 AM](#)

MR. VILLA directed attention to page 4 of the CTE handout. He reported that the CTE plan was also available on the EED, DWLD, and UA websites. He stated Strategy 1: Make transitions planned and accountable for both successful student progress and systemic cooperation. He pointed out that transitions for students were difficult and that available information would help smooth these transitions. He defined personal learning and career plans (PLCP) as guides for students, teachers, parents, and counselors to maintain a vision of relevance for the student's career path and to help smooth the transitions.

[8:39:45 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked if the career development test, WorkKeys, was going to be offered in middle school.

MR. VILLA replied that the WorkKeys assessment was an occupational indicator relative to a student's academic development.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked what changes needed to be made at the schools to ensure the use of PLCPs.

MR. VILLA clarified that WorkKeys was an assessment, whereas the PLCP was a map of the courses a student would need to attain their goals. He declared that some schools were already providing the PLCP on a voluntary basis.

[8:42:57 AM](#)

MR. VILLA, in response to Representative P. Wilson, explained that PLCPs were a tool, a form for a guidance counselor and a student to use in development and measurement of a plan to attain goals.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked if it would be available to every school.

MR. VILLA replied that a suggested PLCP template was being distributed to every district.

[8:44:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON clarified that Alaska required every 11th grade student to take the WorkKeys assessment, and that the score appeared on the student transcripts. He stated that the WIN (Worldwide Interactive Network) developmental program begins in middle school, as well as the KeyTrain program to elevate competencies in relation to WorkKeys. He shared that the WorkKeys assessment could be repeated in the senior year, to allow for an improved score to appear on the transcript.

[8:47:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked if WorkKeys was a test, or a tool for employment.

CYNDY CURRAN, Director, Teaching and Learning Support, Department of Education and Early Development, replied that WorkKeys was a tool, which included three subtests: reading for information, locating information, and math analysis. It aided in an assessment of progress toward the job profiles in a student's areas of interest.

[8:48:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked if there was a standard statewide assessment of skill strengths to help direct middle school students.

MR. VILLA, in response, stated that he was not aware of any such assessment program for career selection. He pointed to the outreach opportunities offered by a variety of industry sectors.

[8:50:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA described a "career ladder" notebook that was provided to students in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, which delineated the course studies at each grade level necessary to accomplish a career interest. It was comprehensive and included earnings potential, where skill sets could be learned, and advancement possibilities in a given field.

MR. VILLA replied that this was one of the models being incorporated into the CTE plan.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON clarified that WorkKeys analyzed jobs and the necessary skills for entry level into a given position.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON suggested that students be assessed for their natural talents and assisted with a corresponding career.

MR. VILLA replied that career, technical, and student organizations were a good source for these assessments.

8:59:00 AM

MR. VILLA directed attention back to Strategy 2, page 5 of the CTE handout, and said that it was necessary to align curricula to meet the current academic, professional, and technical industry standards at all training institutions. He declared that this required an inventory of the programs in Alaska, a review of the employability standards, and an integration of academic with career and technical courses. He expressed the need to align the secondary and post secondary programs for a seamless transition.

9:00:08 AM

MR. VILLA declared that Strategy 3 identified and promoted the career and technical education delivery models. He expressed a need to define the delivery models and the standards. He explained that the access and scheduling for these delivery models also needed definition. He endorsed celebration for effective programs, so they could be replicated for use elsewhere.

9:01:29 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked how Strategies 2 and 3 would be implemented in a small school outside the road system.

MR. VILLA replied that it was already being accomplished via technical preparation courses where high school students received dual credit for sequential high school and post secondary coursework that lead to a degree. He noted that apprenticeship programs were another model.

9:03:02 AM

MR. VILLA reviewed Strategy 4, page 6, which focused on the need to "recruit, develop, support, and retain high-quality career and technical education teachers." He reflected on the contributions of teachers who came from a specific industry. He declared a need for leadership to promote this integration of career and technical education. He spoke about Strategy 5,

which detailed the need to maximize the use of public facilities for training and education of all students. He talked about the inventory of these facilities, as well as the necessary standards, maintenance, and funding for each. He moved on to Strategy 6, page 6, which detailed the need to establish and maintain sustainable funding. He confirmed the need to prioritize the available resources.

[9:06:21 AM](#)

MR. VILLA, directing attention to page 39 of the handout, stated that the University of Alaska had provided priorities and guidelines in career and technical education. He commented that a Workforce Development priority was for pre-college programs which connected youth with career pathways, and that UA had more than 200 credit programs in Workforce Development, with many more that were non-credited. He pointed out that the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education had presented its vision with all the goals being focused on specific outcomes.

[9:09:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON reported on her attendance at the National Conference of State Legislators, and shared that an economist had cautioned to not cut funding for education.

CHAIR DICK commented that a fresh approach was necessary. He opined that the alignment of education and industry was important and possible, and that the money would be made available.

[9:11:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON, referring to Strategy 6.2, read: "Encouraging CTE providers to take advantage of the State of Alaska corporate tax credit for contributions to qualified training programs." He questioned that with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District curtailing the natural resources classes, was it possible for the corporate tax credits to be directed through school districts for funding at a local level.

MR. BELL replied that the programs were not certified by DLWD; however, programs such as AVTEC, which qualified for a tax credit, could receive corporate tax contributions for specific programs.

[9:13:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON requested a definitive response regarding the use of corporate tax credits through school districts for career technical courses which were not certified by DLWD.

[9:14:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE, directing attention back to the CTE program, asked how success and failure would be measured.

MR. VILLA, in response, asked to continue his presentation which would answer the question. He confirmed that the CTE plan had been reviewed by hundreds of people, and had received letters of support for its implementation from EED, DLWD, and University of Alaska. He listed the various upcoming group meetings for input, strategies, priorities, and action plans. He stated that action items within the CTE plan were being defined to measure outcomes. He presented the goal for a mechanism to sustain and share current information. He predicted an information sheet available to every middle and high school student, listing the available degrees and the necessary coursework, as well as contacts for more information.

[9:20:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON suggested that the stakeholders identify the gaps in the plan.

MR. VILLA concluded by presenting an anecdote of high school students accessing and sharing information on the computer about career choices.

[9:25:22 AM](#)

MS. CURRAN highlighted the CTE actions being done in conjunction with UA, EED, and DLWD. She read from pages 13-29 of the CTE plan, which included: ensuring that every student has a personal learning and career plan (PLCP); coordinating program development and delivery among training programs to reduce duplication of effort and the need for remediation; developing data-sharing and other processes that provide information on student progress from one educational level to the next and from school to career; identifying current CTE programs and curricula and making the information publicly accessible; identifying industry standards for statewide priority industries and incorporating the identified knowledge and skills into aligned

CTE curricula at elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels; cataloging and disseminating practices and supporting materials for integrating academic GLEs into CTE programs and career applications into academic programs; and, aligning CTE programs of study that connect secondary academic and CTE courses with recognized industry and postsecondary standards and program content. She confirmed that EED was working with the school districts on strategies to put these into practice.

[9:30:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked if the Perkins federal funds were limited to certain school districts.

MS. CURRAN replied that not every district had applied for the funding.

[9:31:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if the training certificates were accepted by industry and if those students were prioritized for employment. He gave an example of a University of Alaska program for Public Safety Officer training; however, DLWD did not prioritize these students for hire.

MR. VILLA replied that the CTE plan was for alignment of curricula to industry standards. He pointed to a variety of industries which had published standards which could be directly applied to curricula. He noted that some courses would be introductory toward a career, but would not apply toward a certificate.

MR. BELL informed the committee that DLWD did not have a mandate to certify programs or industry standards. He shared that the only area of authority to approve programs was under the Alaska Performance Scholarship program.

[9:35:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON offered his belief that it was necessary for the training certificate to be recognized by the industry as a priority in the hiring process.

[9:36:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked if there was value for a statewide curriculum requirement for an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliant basic safety program.

MR. VILLA expressed his reluctance for course mandates. He noted that some standards could be implemented in various ways by the school districts.

MS. CURRAN established that EED and DLWD were in the process of identifying programs and collecting information to report what programs currently existed and where they lead. She pointed out the availability of on-line programs. She moved on to Strategy 4: developing strategies to educate, recruit, and retain quality CTE teachers, faculty, counselors, and advisors. She shared that EED was working to allow CTE endorsement for certified teachers. She reflected on ways for Type M Limited teaching certificates to be used by an individual in any school district.

[9:42:41 AM](#)

MS. CURRAN explained that a Type M certificate was granted to a person who had career and technical expertise in an industry, was a recognized expert in Alaska Native language or culture, or had a Junior Reserve Officer Training certification from the armed forces. She clarified that a school district requested the Type M Limited certification for the individual.

[9:44:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked if the CTE program addressed semi-retired or under employed people.

MR. VILLA replied that the CTE plan was inclusive and he stressed the importance for an inventory of the training available in a given area.

[9:45:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked to include the Department of Revenue on his earlier request for clarification on corporate tax credits to the school districts. He opined that an integrated response would make it easier to approach corporations for support to the CTE programs.

MR. VILLA affirmed that the cooperation between EED, DLWD, and the University of Alaska while working on this program demonstrated the commonality of goals.

CHAIR DICK suggested a future re-write of the standards to include the ideas currently being discussed.

[9:49:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA directed attention to Strategy 5, which called for a distribution of the inventory of the public facilities and equipment available for training. She suggested a statewide three week educational seminar for this CTE plan.

MR. VILLA replied that the regional training centers had been contacted and inventoried, and that this was being distributed.

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA applauded the effort by the ACTEP team.

[9:51:47 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK thanked the participants, and announced the next regular meeting of the committee.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the Department of Education and Early Development meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.