

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 7, 2021

8:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Harriet Drummond, Co-Chair
Representative Andi Story, Co-Chair
Representative Tiffany Zulkosky
Representative Grier Hopkins
Representative Mike Prax
Representative Mike Cronk
Representative Ronald Gillham

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S): Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

DOUG WALRATH, Director
Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center
Nome, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, presented a PowerPoint, titled "Status of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in the Bering Straits region: A Regional Training Center's Perspective."

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Division Operations Manager
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, co-presented

a PowerPoint, titled "Alaska Career & Technical Education Overview."

BRAD BILLINGS, Career and Technical Education Administrator
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, co-presented a PowerPoint, titled "Alaska Career & Technical Education Overview."

TERI COTHREN, President
Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, gave a presentation on the Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education.

ZACH STENSON, Career and Technical Education Director
Bristol Bay Regional Career and Technical Education Program
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, gave a presentation on the Bristol Bay Regional Career and Technical Education Program.

MATT WIDAMAN, Work Experience & Workforce Coordinator
Career and Technical Education
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, gave a presentation about Career and Technical Education in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

COLIN STEWART, Coordinator
Career and Technical Education
Lower Kuskokwim School District
Bethel, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, presented a Career and Technical Education Report from the Lower Kuskokwim School District.

JONI SIMPSON, Director

Career and Technical Education
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, presented on the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District's Career and Technical Education Program.

CATHY LECOMPTE, Division Director
Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC)
Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Seward, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field, gave a presentation on the Alaska Vocational Technical Center.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:02:07 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Representatives Drummond, Cronk, Gillham, Hopkins, Prax, and Story were present at the call to order. Representative Zulkosky arrived (via teleconference) as the meeting was in progress.

PRESENTATION(S): Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field

[8:03:17 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced that the only order of business would be a presentation on Career & Technical Education (CTE): Reports from the Field.

[8:04:43 AM](#)

DOUG WALRATH, Director, Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center, began his presentation on slide 1 by introducing the Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC). He explained that NACTEC is the Nome-based regional training center. The organization is a cross district partnership of the Bering Strait School District, Nome Public Schools, and the City of Nome. The center is supported by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) with boarding school stipends and a residential training program, and by the

Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) with Technical and Vocational Education Program (TVEP) funding. Villages as far north as Shishmaref, as far west as St. Lawrence Island, and all around Norton Sound are served by NACTEC, Mr. Walrath explained. Students fly in for residential training.

MR. WALRATH read from the next slide, titled, "NACTEC Community Technical Education (CTE) Focus," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

1. NACTEC delivers variable term (2-4 week intensive formats) residential CTE programs aligning with priority industries: Healthcare, Transportation, Construction, Hospitality & Tourism, Seafood Harvesting & Processing.

- Northwest Area Health Education Center (NW AHEC)
- DMV 3rd Party Examiner/Approved D.E. School
- AVTEC Maritime: USCG certified training (certifications)
- UAF-CTC: FAA approval Aviation Maintenance (dual credit)

[8:08:00 AM](#)

MR. Walrath shared slide 3, titled "CTE Training = Workforce Development Alignment." He explained the NACTEC works so its courses align with what is happening in the region. The first article on the slide showed a new project to be funded in Nome, and Mr. Walrath pointed out that this would create need for commercial driver licenses (CDLs). The second article also suggested a future need for heavy equipment operators, requiring more CDLs.

MR. WALRATH directed attention to slide 4, "COVID-Impacted Environment." He explained that students who would otherwise have had twenty-five plus CTE offerings have not been able to fly in. The organization aligns with two school districts, so NACTEC shifted its staff to semester-based education for Nome Public Schools and was able to offer a wide array of training that otherwise would not have been available in that format. He stated that NACTEC has also delivered a limited adult Driver Education training with a one-on-one environment for COVID-19 safety protocols.

[8:10:11 AM](#)

MR. WALRATH shared slide 5, "Distance Delivery CTE - Virtual Environment." He explained that NACTEC wanted to create an interface where students could come to Nome in a virtual world, so they could explore NACTEC's facilities. The slide displayed 3D scans giving a "dollhouse view" of the residential living center and the auto shop. He said this information is available at www.nacteconline.org. The interactive site is embedded with information-rich tags, so a viewer can learn more about a given course.

MR. WALRATH shared slide 6, "Distance Delivery CTE - Course," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Small Engine Repair - 29 videos
- Intro to Aviation - 15 videos
- Intro to Healthcare
- Heavy Equipment Operator
- Flux Core Arc Welding
- Potential Statewide Delivery w/ DEED

MR. WALRATH explained that NACTEC decided to offer five distance delivery courses. The organization produced videos to share information about traditionally hands-on courses.

[8:13:28 AM](#)

MR. WALRATH turned to slide 7, "Distance Delivery CTE - Aviation." He explained that NACTEC redesigned its website, giving access to the Intro to Aviation course and to Aviation Ground School. He said that NACTEC already had aviation training devices in village schools thanks to a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant. The students use a "GoogleDoc" flight log to enter their flights, and NACTEC is able to track who is using it and who is interested in aviation.

MR. WALRATH directed attention to slide 8, "Distance Delivery CTE - Healthcare." He stated that NACTEC is offering an Intro to Health Course, QPR - Suicide Prevention, and bandaging workshops for junior-high students.

MR. WALRATH presented the final slide of his presentation, "NACTEC Legislative Emphasis." He explained that there were a few things he wanted to draw attention towards. The first was HB 100 "Extend Workforce Invest Board Allocations" which is a TVEP reauthorization bill, which NACTEC had been a recipient of

since 2009. The second item was DEED residential stipends, which they did not receive this year because they were not able to deliver residential training. The last item to which he drew attention was the Alaska Education Tax Credit. He noted that the tax credit was stripped in 2018 of a program that allowed business and industry to make contributions to programs like NACTEC. From 2010 to 2019 the Alaska Education Tax Credit represented twenty-eight percent of NACTEC's operating budget. In 2020 and 2021 it is now 12 percent of NACTEC's operating budget, Mr. Walrath said.

[8:17:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked how many students went through the program in a year.

MR. WALRATH replied that in recent years the organization served above 400 students in a year.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked how students were doing at obtaining employment, and if that was in the region or elsewhere.

MR. WALRATH directed attention to the homepage of NACTEC's website, which displays NACTEC's "success series posters." He pointed out that there is also a tab for graduates to submit information, but he didn't have the exact number. Qualitatively, he said, students are seen [working] around Nome and in their villages, as well.

[8:19:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked about the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) maritime program in Seward. She asked how maritime training differed once training was relocated to Nome.

MR. WALRATH replied that NACTEC's partnership with AVTEC permits the delivery of Coastguard certified programs through the Nome Campus. He said that AVTEC staff comes up and teams with NACTEC staff to deliver the training. Bringing students in from the villages and instructors up from AVTEC permits a lower cost of training and gives the students exposure to AVTEC in high school, he explained. He said the students can then continue on from their introduction to nautical skills into seaman training.

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND clarified that this meant the government-certified United States Coast Guard (USCG) training

was not available in Nome unless the certified AVTEC crew comes up.

MR. WALRATH replied that Representative Drummond's understanding was correct, and that NACTEC needs a certified instructor. The two organizations have had the relationship for three years prior to this past COVID-19-impacted year.

[8:21:46 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY asked that any further questions be submitted to her office so the committee could move on to the next presenter. She commented that since students were not coming in for residential, the program had switched to a semester system and now had more Nome students, and she asked if NACTEC had plans to continue that collaboration.

[8:22:38 AM](#)

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Division Operations Manager, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, introduced herself to the committee.

[8:22:55 AM](#)

BRAD BILLINGS, Career and Technical Education Administrator, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, introduced himself to the committee.

[8:23:07 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE directed attention to slide 2. She told the committee members that the department's mission is to provide an excellent education for every student every day. She pointed out a phrase from DEED's vision, to help "shape worthwhile and satisfying lives." Ms. Riddle said that with Career and Technical Education (CTE) partners, [DEED] strives to set students up to earn a living wage in a career pathway that is meaningful to them. She explained that the presentations are about how DEED's partners are helping students do that. She said the department does this by providing information to partners and [school] districts.

MS. RIDDLE moved to slide 3, "Alaska's Education Challenge." She highlighted the second point on the slide which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

2. Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs

MS. RIDDLE explained that CTE works very strongly with partners. She said that there is a community that is working with students and adults of all ages to try to [help students achieve] living wage jobs as they move forward in their lives.

[8:24:26 AM](#)

MR. BILLINGS moved onto slide 4 regarding post-secondary institutions. Mr. Billings emphasized that partnerships are integral to the department's goals, and that CTE is effective because of partnerships. He explained the idea of taking students beyond the classroom to work opportunities with the goal of high-skill, high-wage jobs. He then directed attention to a graphic in the corner of the slide and said the programs within [Alaska's] high schools are in the lower-left circle with an arrow on it. That is DEED funding that flows through the division. He shared that these are Carl Perkins federal funds designed to promote CTE opportunities to high schools. Then [there are] the state formula funds that are distributed to schools, which is state money, he explained.

MR. BILLINGS acknowledged some organizations that serve high schools and secondary schools and are pushing students beyond the classroom. The first of which are known as Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). The state has seven of these, he explained, offering Future Farmers of America, Educators Rising, and Business Professionals of America as examples. These are organizations, he explained, that are providing students with a leadership opportunity, and allowing them to move out into the community and into the workplace. The second organization [in the graphic] is Alaska's Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). He explained that this is a local organization that is linked to a national organization that advocates and collaborates with school districts and other stakeholders to develop and promote CTE resources.

MR. BILLINGS reiterated that while the figure in the corner [of the slide] represents what is happening through DEED, the partnerships involved create links. Linking to post-secondary institutions through dual credit systems allows students both high school credit, as well as credit in university systems, or through technical and trade schools or institutions, he

continued. The other important partnership, Mr. Billings explained, is through employers and industry through work-based learning. He explained that the career information system helps students research what careers are available to them, clear up to an apprenticeship, a formal arrangement with an employer, or a work release type situation. That, he said, is moving students out into the workplace. He stated that DEED partners with industry through many of the adult training institutions that DLWD delivers. Again, he stated, this is all moving students towards high-wage, high-skill jobs.

[8:27:53 AM](#)

MR. BILLINGS introduced slide 5, "Secondary CTE Resource Ecosystem." Again, he emphasized the partnerships involved and proceeded to explain the program funding. The division receives \$5.1 million from Carl Perkins federal funds, he informed the committee members. He explained that eighty-five percent of that moves directly through to school districts and to a handful of postsecondary stakeholders. On top of that, he said, CTE has \$17.6 million from [the Base Student Allocation (BSA) formula] funds [from the state of Alaska]. Within [the BSA] formula, 1.015 percent is directed towards school districts for CTE activities. Though not strictly tracked, he explained that larger districts may be putting more money towards their strong CTE programs. Mr. Billings said that then CTE expands outwards with private government grants to secondary schools. He noted that this is not something the division is measuring, but it is impactful. An even larger resource pool, he continued, are the post-secondary government institutions, the DOLWD, the University of Alaska [UA] system, and training institutions like the TVEP training institution. Beyond that, he said, is the industries, and [the funds] they are spending on training employees and developing work force pipelines. He concluded that there is a large ecosystem, of which DEED's piece is a small piece, but the key is magnifying and linking that small piece to these larger resources.

[8:30:05 AM](#)

MR. BILLINGS introduced slide 6, "Career and Technical Education: Cluster to Course." He stated that the Carl Perkins Funding focuses DEED on programs of study. He noted that the diagram of organizational structures on the slide begins with the [outer sphere] "Career Cluster," with "Health Science" as an example. He informed committee members that there are 16 career clusters [such as Health Science] that are recognized

nationally. The diagram then moves down to the smallest unit of management, he explained, which is a "Course," or a classroom. He offered his experience when he was in middle school and first introduced to CTE in a stand-alone course, "Introduction to Woodshop." He noted that it didn't necessarily link him to employment opportunities, credits, or credentials beyond the classroom. He argued that [CTE programs have] gotten a lot smarter and more intentional in how [the programs] are linking those things. He pointed to the middle circle of the diagram, the "Program of Study/CTEPS" and explained that this is the unit of organization and management in the high school and secondary level that is the program of study.

[8:31:29 AM](#)

MR. BILLINGS introduced slide 7, "High Quality CTE Program of Study." He began by stating that a program of study is responsive to demand. He recalled Mr. Walrath mentioning the deep water port that was being put into Nome. That is a demand, Mr. Billings explained, that is going to need workers, and so the Career and Technical Education Programs of Study (CTEPS) should be responsive to local, regional, and state-level demand. The second thing, Mr. Billings continued, is it should allow for students to develop career awareness and to explore different careers. The third thing that a CTEPS should provide is multiple "stacked" courses, he said. He argued that it's not just dabbling in woodshop and then going over and taking a Home Economics course and never the two shall meet. He suggested rather that these are courses that are moving the student from exploratory and employability skills to technical skills that can then be applied in the workplace. The fourth thing CTE should provide is representative of existing standards academic, employability, and then from the industry side with technical standards. He said that the additional characteristic of a program of study is that it is focused on credentials and credits that apply after the student graduates. He said this could be dual credit with the university, or it could be having a leg up in a training program such as AVTEC upon graduation. He concluded that a program of study focuses on work-based learning and moving beyond the classroom. He said this could be a registered apprenticeship or work-based credit that a student can get while in school.

[8:33:44 AM](#)

MR. BILLINGS presented slide 8, "CTE Partnerships." He explained that Carl Perkins funding requires a local advisory

committee and consultation with the committee on an ongoing basis. He said as school districts develop a CTE plan, the districts gather industry representatives, parents, student representatives, and different stakeholders. The districts consult the stakeholders to get a sense of what is needed and what the interest is in, which is an important partnership that happens locally, he shared. He then gave an endorsement to what Mr. Walrath said about the TVEP reauthorization and pointed out that DEED is not supervising or handling the funding that goes into the TVEP institutions. He stated that [TVEP institutions] have been amazing at intentionally reaching out to high school students and have partnered with DEED and have been present at school district training events to make sure that the institutions are connecting with those upcoming high school students.

MR. BILLINGS said UA has an Alaska transition coalition. He explained that DEED has partnered with the universities and sat elbow to elbow at some training events with representatives from the various UA campuses and systems. This is important because those arrangements are made between a school district and a local or regional campus, he stated. Having those individuals from the University of Alaska Transition Coalition (UATC) sitting elbow to elbow with school district CTE representatives has been vital and important and is something DEED would like to continue, he said. These are just some examples of the partnerships that DEED is expanding, he said.

[8:36:23 AM](#)

MR. BILLINGS presented slide 9, "Integrated Career Pathways Model." He explained that this is an illustration to demonstrate the same idea [from the previous slide] of partnerships. In the past, it could be that the split arrow was actually two separate arrows, he said referring to the slide. There was what was happening in schools, and then there were the larger training and opportunities for adults, he explained. About two decades ago there was an intentional effort nationally so that the programs of studies being built in schools would feed into what students would face as adults, he said. [The goal is] to provide opportunities and a leg up for [student's futures], he said. He argued that this illustration reemphasized that CTEPS is designed to flow into what the adult opportunities are going to be.

MR. BILLINGS presented slide 10, "COVID-19 Flexibility and Innovation." He declared that the elephant in the room has been

the interruption caused by COVID-19. He said normally school districts need to spend federal funds by June 30; however, DEED was able to work with the U.S. Department of Education to allow for some flexibility for districts to carry those funds forward. He noted that there was a lot of travel that was planned in the spring of 2020 that didn't happen, and so there were funds that were [left unused]. Rather than gathering that back, he explained that DEED wanted to make sure that the districts still had access to those funds.

MR. BILLINGS said that in the spring of 2020 DEED had a weekly collaborative call that was a gathering of school district CTE representatives via webinar to talk about issues. He reminded the committee members that things were changing daily then, and so [it was important to] talk about challenges to CTE [and share] solutions that were bubbling up across the state. He shared that DEED has two annual conferences: one is supported by the ACTE, the other by DEED. Both of those, he continued, happened virtually, and so DEED was able to continue with that training and partnership even though [CTE professionals] are not meeting face to face as they were in the past. He recognized the school districts and post-secondary partners, and the innovation and efforts involved in the past year.

MR. BILLINGS concluded by addressing slide 11, "CTE Resources," which lists resources available on DEED's webpage and slide 12, "Contact Information," which gave contact information for Ms. Riddle and Mr. Billings.

[8:39:33 AM](#)

MS. RIDDLE, regarding Slide 11, directed attention to the "Alaska CTE Perkins State Plan," explaining that this was the plan that DEED created in response to the new legislation that reauthorized the Carl Perkins program. The link from the slide discusses DEED's goals and ideas moving forward. She explained that the plan was done collaboratively with many of the partners addressing the committee members today. She also pointed out the "Alaska Work-Based Learning Guide" that DEED created last year in partnership with DLWD, DCCED, and some of the districts. She then offered to field questions.

[8:40:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked if specific trades, skills, or classes were set at the federal, state, or community level.

MR. BILLINGS replied that federally there are a number of designators for different types of courses to try and provide consistency. However, he continued, the program was built locally, so school districts define the courses they have, and [the districts] would develop the curriculum. If partnering with a specific industry or organization, [the districts] may use that organization's curriculum and course work. He said that is up to the school district to develop. Carl Perkins funds [must] be used to respond to an economic need, he explained. What the data shows is that the developing industries may partner with a training institution or another school district to build a course Mr. Billings explained, arguing that courses are ultimately developed locally.

[8:42:18 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY asked if DEED had a list of CTE programs in the state by district and/or school so there was information on each region and area. If not, she noted she would find that information helpful to have, including a list of the dual credit opportunities. She stated that it is important for members of the committee to know what is happening with the CTE world.

MR. BILLINGS replied DEED was approving courses funded through Carl Perkins funds and tracking those CTEPS, and that is something DEED should be able to compile. He explained that the arrangements for dual credits are managed locally, through a particular campus through an articulation agreement. That information could be gathered by reaching out to school districts, he offered, and so DEED should be able to provide an answer.

[8:44:14 AM](#)

TERI COTHREN, President, Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education (Alaska ACET), thanked the committee members for the opportunity to discuss the association and the importance of CTE for the state of Alaska. She stated that she would provide an overview of the Alaska ACTE, how the association's initiatives are supporting CTE across the state, and a few data points to demonstrate the importance of CTE, especially as [CTE providers] work together to assist in Alaska's economic recovery.

MS. COTHREN presented slide 2, "Our Mission and Vision." She shared that Alaska ACTE's board members are united in the mission to ensure all Alaska students have access to quality CTE

across Alaska secondary districts and across post-secondary providers. She said that as an association, Alaska ACTE's broader vision highlights the value of education and its commitment to supporting partnerships between educators and industry to address Alaska's workforce needs.

[8:45:25 AM](#)

MS. COTHREN presented slide 3, which listed the Board of Directors. She shared the Board of Directors was comprised of volunteers from across the state who work in both secondary and post-secondary education. She noted that Alaska ACTE is fortunate to have an ex-officio board member from the DEED which, as Mr. Billings and Mr. Walrath mentioned, is a key partner of Alaska ACTE.

MS. COTHREN presented slide 4, "Alaska Economic and ACTE Regions." She stated that several of the board members are representative of Alaska's six economic regions. Board members' active participation on the board and within their regions strengthens Alaska ACTE's ability as an association to carry out its mission and provide the mechanism to connect with partners across the state, she shared.

MS. COTHREN next moved onto slide 5, "National Affiliation & Member Benefits." She explained that about four years ago the association joined the national ACTE to become an affiliated association. She said this expanded Alaska ACTE's benefits to their members, including Alaska ACTE's ability as an association to offer continuing education through the CTE learning portal that provides CTE professionals access to over 170 self-paced online courses and the opportunity for college credit. She said the association's affiliation with National ACTE provides the award winners the opportunity to be recognized at a regional level. This also expands recognition of CTE excellence in Alaska, she pointed out. She said that as a state association, Alaska ACTE publishes three newsletters each year to highlight CTE around the state and to keep their members updated on CTE activities. She said Alaska ACTE also maintains a website and social media presence to elevate the awareness and importance of CTE. As advocating for CTE is essential to the association's mission, the board members appreciate opportunities such as this hearing to advocate for CTE. She mentions that another way Alaska ACTE has provided advocacy, is to work with their members to pass resolutions of support for CTE legislation. Most recently Alaska ACTE passed a resolution of support to reauthorize the technical vocational program that has already

been mentioned by the previous presenters, an important program to provide stable funding for CTE across the state. The legislation introduced last legislative session by Chair Story to provide avenues for students to incorporate CTE into their APS application is also a resolution of support Alaska ACTE passed.

[8:47:59 AM](#)

MS. COTHREN introduced slide 6, "Alaska ACTE Clearinghouse." She highlighted two additional ways the association is providing professional development and networking opportunities as an association to their members and the state. In 2019, Alaska ACTE decided to take the lead in responding to a long-time request of CTE educators and administrators, she said, who asked for a clearinghouse that would help with onboarding by providing access to CTE resources, but also stand and leverage existing quality and diverse resources that enhance students' career pathways and help to improve alignment and provide a platform to work with peers. She explained that the association is in the development phase and is targeted to be fully operational later this year.

MS. COTHREN presented slide 7, "Professional Development Conference." She stated that each year the association hosts a professional development conference to bring CTE educators, administrators, and industry together to learn, network, and grow CTE. She explained that the association utilized the opportunity that 2020 presented to host its first ever virtual conference last October. While the survey results were positive, she continued, Alaska ACTE hopes to deliver the next conference in person this fall in response to members' request to be able to access the hands on training and additional networking opportunities that the in-person conference provides.

[8:49:29 AM](#)

MS. COTHREN directed attention to slide 8, "Awards, celebrating excellence in CTE." She stated that a highlight of the conference is the awards luncheon, where the association has the privilege to recognize the outstanding work of the CT professionals across Alaska. She explained that award winners are nominated by peers in the six categories shown on the slide: CTE Teacher of the Year, New CTE Teacher of the Year, CTE Leadership Award, Community Service Award, Career Guidance Award, and Innovative Program Award.

MS. COTHREN introduced slide 9, "2020 Community Service Award." She highlighted one of the recent award winners, noting it was a great example [considering the social effects of COVID-19]. The Bering Strait School District (BSSD) CTE Program received the 2020 Community Service Award, she shared, for manufacturing personal protective equipment (PPE). As the urgency of the pandemic increased, PPE for regional first responders, health care providers, and seafood industry workers became extremely difficult to obtain, she explained. The Bering Strait School District stepped up and mobilized their CTE program to produce PPE for essential workers throughout the region, Ms. Cothren said. She informed the committee that the BSSD CTE program produced 1,200 three-dimensional (3D) printed face shields and countless cloth masks. The PPE was produced in record time under challenging circumstances and was in the hands of people before the national supply chain was able to adequately respond to their regional needs, she stated. She concluded that the program's success contributed to the Norton Sound Seafood Products' processing season, concluding this September without a single COVID-19 case.

[8:51:06 AM](#)

MS. COTHREN presented slide 10, "Value of CTE." She highlighted a few points that show how critical CTE is to Alaska's work force and economy, especially in a time of economic recovery. She explained that CTE programs in Alaska prepare students for highly technical careers in oil and gas, mining, maritime, healthcare, aviation, information technology, and much more. She explained that the data shows that when secondary students concentrate in a CTE pathway, they graduate at a higher rate than their peers, with a graduation rate of 95 percent in Alaska. She noted that 41 percent of Alaska CTE students are economically disadvantaged, a trend that has been on the rise for five years. Through CTE secondary pathways, there are often opportunities for students to access college credit, helping to close the equity gap and increase transitions to post-secondary and employment. She pointed out that there are thousands of Alaskans enrolled in secondary and post-secondary CTE programs, obtaining skills that lead to employment or to advance their careers. Ms. Cothren noted that this is especially critical at this time [because of the effects of COVID-19 on the economy]. When considering Alaskans who have been displaced by the pandemic, she explained, CTE pathways provide short-term training opportunities to "re-skill" and "up-skill" Alaskans, getting them back to work, strengthening employment, and boosting Alaska's economic recovery. Ms. Cothren thanked the

committee members for supporting CTE in Alaska. She said it is good for Alaska's students, industries, and the state.

[8:53:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked how Alaska ACTE is working to build connections between districts and local apprenticeship programs, so students can be ready to begin careers in the state.

MS. COTHREN replied that the association has board members that are representative of all six regions across the state, and the board members regularly network with school districts in those regions to support all pathways of teaching CTE that are inclusive of pre-apprenticeship, on-the-job, work-based learning and opportunities that lead to apprenticeships. She also mentioned the association's newsletter which highlights those opportunities in order to increase awareness of those CTE pathways that would include apprenticeships.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked whether the amount of state formula funds for CTE funding has been sufficient.

MS. COTHREN responded that she felt that question would be better directed toward DEED.

[8:55:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked about board members' affiliations, noting that it would be helpful to know what companies, school districts, or other organizations board members are affiliated with. She also suggested that the two graphs on slide 10 each deserve their own slide. She stated that [the slide] has a lot of critical information that would help the committee members tremendously.

CO-CHAIR STORY asked what the timeline was regarding the clearinghouse idea.

MS. COTHREN replied that Alaska ACTE is in the development phase and hopes to have the clearinghouse fully operational in the fall.

[8:57:11 AM](#)

ZACH STENSON, Career and Technical Education Director, Bristol Bay Regional Career and Technical Education (BBRCTE) Program, began his presentation on slides 2 and 3, informing the

committee members that BBRCTE is a new consortium made up of four regional school districts, including the Bristol Bay Region School District, Dillingham School District, Southwest Region School District, and Lake and Peninsula School District. The main goal of the consortium is to build a regional workforce from the ground up and to offer students the opportunities to learn about different pathways and different career options, he explained. The consortium operates through twenty-one different schools, ranging in size from several hundred to fifteen students, he noted. The consortium enables the different schools to offer a consistent CTE program to these different sizes of schools. He said that industry experts are brought into the classes, and students are brought into the two main hubs, Dillingham and Naknek, four times a year for one-week intensives. The focus of those classes, he explained, is on jobs and careers that are in need in the state and within the region. The instructors are experts within the region or the state, who are able to take time to focus on training students and building their skills, he shared.

[9:00:17 AM](#)

MR. STENSON moved to slide 4 and spoke to some shifts taken in the past year in CTE to accommodate not being able to have students in the week-long residential dormitory [because of the pandemic]. One of the changes was through a partnership with Honda, he shared. He explained that Honda donated engines to all the interested communities, while the instructor in Naknek created a series of lessons and recordings, allowing students to go through a digital service technician training at their own pace. He drew attention to the background image on the slide which was of a 12-volt electrical kit that students used to learn how to wire the majority of appliances on a skiff, as well as many electronics that would be found on a commercial fishing vessel, through a distance Zoom program with an instructor in Dillingham through the Alaska Sea Grant. The consortium has been able to shift into its Distance Allied Health classes with students progressing towards a certified nursing assistant certificate in a two-year program thanks to BBRCTE's partnership with the Alaska Health Education Center (AHEC), he said. He said this has helped students keep progressing through a medical terminology program. He also noted that BBRCTE had made some shifts for aviation, with students studying unmanned aviation and fixed-wing aircraft through a dual credit program with the Bristol Bay campus in partnership with a company in McGrath called Av-STEM. He mentioned that while this has been a big

shift, there are some opportunities that BBRCTE hasn't been able to do in the past.

MR. STENSON highlighted a recently completed virtual career fair that was created in partnership with the region's community development quota (CDQ) group, the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC). He acknowledged that it is challenging for students to look for summer employment or what's next without access to interviews, and so the partnerships put on the virtual career fair. He noted that there were about 200 participants from across the region with forty tables staffed with local, regional, state, and national employers and recruiters. He quoted teacher Nancy Mills, from Chignik Lagoon, as having said, "Thank you for putting this together. It has been so fun watching lightbulbs go off and excited expressions on my students' faces. Students are buzzing with career focused conversations. What a great event." The fair was such a success, that Mr. Stenson said BBRCTE plans to continue with some version of the event, because having such a wide range of presenters and having so many students be able to participate [made it successful].

[9:05:01 AM](#)

MR. STENSON presented slide 5, "2021-2022 Programs." He wanted to look at some changes for the next year. He stated that some of the learning that BBRCTE had done in the past school year focused on how the program can offer coursework virtually is being filtered into blended plans for next year. In the next year, he continued, BBRCTE will focus on welding and fabrication, with four different weeks scheduled for students to come in and gain their American welding society certification. In between those weeks, he explained, each student will be sent home with a virtual welding kit to their home communities so they may continue their welding practice and will be meeting once a week with their instructor as they build their skills in the communities where they do not have access to a welding shop. Through this platform, he continued, they will be offering a distance aluminum skiff building academy this summer to help get students further along in their coursework. Looking at commercial fishing coursework, he said, being able mix in the 12-volt maritime electric kit in addition to the week-long intensives will allow the students to advance further.

MR. STENSON discussed a semester-long business and entrepreneurship class through Alaska Business Week. Next year, he explained, rather than just being offered as a one-week

intensive, BBRCTE is looking at how to build and strengthen the program through a mix of some distance coursework with Alaska Business Week and by having them come in, in person.

MR. STENSON also mentioned BBRCTE's hope that the distance coursework could help lead the program with its future goals. The program is planning to build more to help students transition into work studies and internship programs, he explained. He said he felt one of the program's biggest weaknesses is that there is not a good system in place to support students after finishing their programs. Regarding the question from earlier in the meeting of how student success is tracked once they enter the workforce, Mr. Stenson said BBRCTE neither has a system for that nor a good system to build internships, but it is hopeful that offering blended courses where students work with their instructors via distance learning will support the program in transitioning to internships and work study programs.

[9:08:15 AM](#)

MR. STENSON moved on to slide 6. He acknowledged that the program is only as strong as its partners. He opined that the program has been fortunate to have an incredible leadership team of superintendents that value all the students involved, not just those from their respective districts. He also acknowledged the CDQ group, the Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC), DEED, the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Bristol Bay Campus, AVTEC, AHEC, and most recently Honda. He reiterated that the work being done is collaborative, and he believes that in the next year the ability to collaborate, because of having had so many virtual opportunities to discuss things, is going to grow.

MR. STENSON left the committee with an anecdote of a successful student. He shared that a teacher expressed that the reason one of her students was coming to school was because he was told he couldn't just show up and do the small engines distance program and not do his other courses. That course was such a driver for the student, Mr. Stenson said, that he went on to receive the "Most Valuable Mechanic" award. He stressed the importance and the impact of the CTE program and thanked the committee members for their time.

[9:10:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked about the internship program and how BBRCTE is interfacing with employers in the region.

MR. STENSON replied that currently BBRCTE's discussions with both the advisory committee and with different employers is focused on what the employer needs are. He said BBRCTE hopes to launch this program next year and is currently looking through rules and regulations in terms of age and employment so the program can do this in a way that will be beneficial to employers. He clarified that BBRCTE's advisory committee doesn't have a real framework, and there is a lot of creation right now in how this can be done in a way that everybody is going to feel comfortable regarding liability. He noted that they are open to any assistance with this program from around the state.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX opined that developing networks and gaining experience are important aspects of the program.

CO-CHAIR STORY commented that in many districts and in other countries there is a requirement that juniors and seniors have industry partners.

[9:13:02 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked how virtual welding kits work.

MR. STENSON replied that the virtual welding kits look like real welding kits. The user puts on a virtual welding hood, which is connected to the computer, he explained, and similar equipment to welding guns were still used. He acknowledged that it is not as exciting or as real as welding, but it still gives students hands-on practice.

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND clarified that the welding hood was a virtual reality mask. She asked if the hood led to broadband availability issues.

MR. STENSON replied no, broadband is not an issue, because it is a program that loads directly from a computer, and welds are saved for instructors to review. While BBRCTE is still working out the kinks, he said, there is a way for instructors to go back and review those welds to be able to offer weekly coaching to the students. He mentioned that a grant from the Alaska Community Foundation funds this portion of the program.

[9:16:27 AM](#)

MATT WIDAMAN, CTE Specialist, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD), began his presentation and directed attention to slide 2. He referred to KPBSD as a "Microcosm of Alaska," noting that there are schools only accessible by boat or plane, as well as schools on the road system. He noted that the district has forty-two schools, which have challenges related to CTE and student opportunity.

MR. WIDAMAN discussed how COVID-19 affected the school year, which began remotely. He explained that the district is broken up into three sections: the South Peninsula, the Eastside, and the Central Peninsula. There are variations between the sections, but Mr. Widaman spoke to the Central Peninsula, because that's where the district's mass numbers are located. He stated that the district returned to in-person schooling for the months of September and October, then went back to remote schooling November through January, and then by mid-January the district was back in schools. He said KPBSD has done a back and forth shift of consistency for the [CTE] program, as well.

[9:18:21 AM](#)

MR. WIDAMAN presented slide 3, "Response to COVID." He stated that in response to COVID, the [the CTE program] had to do a lot of staff mitigation protocols and students had a lot of PPE because with CTE there is a lot of sharing, a lot of handling equipment, and so forth. He said the district had to brief its instructors on how to best facilitate those aspects. Some of the challenges were hands-on courses such as welding, construction, and culinary arts, he noted. He further noted that many courses had decreased enrollment, and many students were shifted to other opportunities. When the kids were sent home, he continued, [they received] construction kits to simulate building supplies; materials were sent to the students to give them hands on experience and to keep them involved with the course. Mr. Widaman highlighted that when the district was shut down, the length of time of the shutdown was undetermined, so the school district came up with specific mitigation plans just for the CTE course. The district realized it [needed to be able to offer hands on learning] so it was able to offer mitigation plans with the larger schools of Soldotna High, Kenai Central High, and Nikiski Middle/High School specifically for those classes, he shared. He noted that one of the things the district has seen has been an uptick in work experience course students, and as Mr. Billings mentioned earlier, that is an important part of the program of study. Many students looked

for an increase in work experience aligned with their course of studies, he said. Mr. Widaman added that the opportunities the district wanted to offer were through the Kenai Peninsula College. Students were taking college courses there, he offered, and also through AVTEC for nautical skills courses. He explained that the district reached out to "post-secondaries" to facilitate further training.

[9:20:44 AM](#)

MR. WIDAMAN presented slide 4, "Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO)." He said that the district continued with the CTSOs, which is a strong foundation for students going into the workplace or post-secondary. He said there are three main offerings. The first he shared is Skills USA, which has unfortunately been cancelled the past two years because it is very hands-on. The second he told the committee about is Educators Rising, which is district wide, so the district was able to complete it with several state and national finalists. The third, he explained, is a strong Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter. He mentioned that students will compete in Seward in an upcoming state conference.

MR. WIDAMAN presented slide 5, KPBSD Career Pathways." He told the committee members that while there are 16 career pathways recognized nationally, KPBSD has combined them into eight career pathways because they do not have courses to meet each pathway. When coming up with course designs, he explained that the district identified the CTE outcomes for the district's students, and Lower 48 positions and jobs. He said there are always three primary questions they hear from stakeholders, as shown on slide 5, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

What preparation and skills are needed for the workplace and post-secondary education or training?
Employability Skills?

Other ways to best prepare our students for workplace or career readiness? Industry credentials?

What courses or pathways should be a focus? 5 years?

[9:22:48 AM](#)

MR. WIDAMAN presented slide 6, "Economic Trends." He informed the committee members that the district looks at economic trends

both statewide and within Kenai. With the help of DLWD, the district tries to identify who Kenai's constituents are, tracking data about net migration, job placement, and available industries, he said. The district keeps up with economic or current trends that highlight or showcase its programs.

MR. WIDAMAN presented slide 7. He said one of the new focuses the district is pushing is computer science aspects. With COVID-19, he said, there has been a large increase in computing jobs that are available from home services to being able to work remotely.

MR. WIDAMAN presented slide 8, "Kenai Peninsula Construction Academy." He said that one of the great opportunities aside from Perkins funding for KPBSD's CTE programs was a grant opportunity through the Alaska Community Foundation. The district applied for the grant with the Alaska Construction Academy (AKCA) located in the Kenai Peninsula, and next fall four courses will be offered for high school students focused on electrical, plumbing, welding, and construction, he said. Any time the district has partnered with post-secondary institutions such as AVTEC, University of Alaska Anchorage-Kenai Peninsula College (UAA-KPC), and AKCA, he stated, has resulted in amazing opportunities for students.

MR. WIDAMAN presented slide 9. He stated that in response to COVID-19 and the related shutdowns and many courses remaining unfulfilled regarding hands-on requirements, the district has provided a number of summer opportunities for students. He cited offerings from the slide which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Kenai Peninsula College- Emergency Trauma Technician
Kenai Central High School- Construction Academies-
Alaska Petroleum Academies(2)- KPEDD
Certified Nursing Assistant- Mtn. Haven/Providence-
Seward Area
Microsoft Certification Online Course- KPBSD
Workplace and Internship Readiness Online Course-
KPBSD

MR. WIDAMAN thanked the committee members for having him speak.

[9:26:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND, referring to slide 4, asked what happened in the year prior to the pandemic that shut down the Skills USA region and state events.

MR. WIDAMAN responded that the previous year's events were scheduled in March. He explained that the 2019 year was normal, but the event wasn't held in 2020 or 2021.

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND referred to slide 5 and asked if students were trained in Alaska and then left for jobs in the Lower 48.

MR. WIDAMAN replied not necessarily, the district is trying to give them a well-rounded student experience. As shown in the economic trends on slide 6, he explained, it identifies that Alaska is losing many teens and students in their twenties. The district's thought, he offered, is that maybe they are leaving for post-secondary education and training, and the district is trying to identify and meet the needs of the students, not just specific jobs for Alaska.

[9:28:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked if the partnership with Educators Rising was for training future educators, and how it worked with the K-12 outreach program at the University of Alaska.

MR. WIDAMAN replied Educators Rising is an organization that provides courses and classes for the district's students. He explained that the course is taught by Emanuela Pokryfki who wrote the courses with the University system. There is an articulation through University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) in alignment, he said. He then confirmed it is to get students interested in the education field and provide opportunities through credits through UAS.

[9:30:54 AM](#)

COLIN STEWART, CTE Coordinator, Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD), presented a CTE Report from the district. Mr. Stewart informed the committee that he moved to Alaska from Washington ten years ago to the coastal village of Kongiganak, where he taught. He said there are 22 communities with 27 different schools in the district, and that LKSD is the largest school district in Alaska. The district office in Bethel heavily supports many programs in all the villages, especially the secondary level, he said.

MR. STEWART presented slide 3, "CTE Programs Overview." He then read career pathways listed in a diagram on the slide: skilled trades, engineering, education, multimedia, computer science, health careers, and tribal management. He explained that these are the pathways focused on in Bethel. He said that because the district is spread across a wide region and there is limited instructor capacity, the CTE programs are provided in a variety of formats. He mentioned the phrase "traditional, in-person, at-home school" and said that in Bethel, the district is fortunate to have a few long-term, quality CTE instructors. In the villages, he continued, the district has [CTE instructors] from time to time, but much of this is done through "distance delivery via zoom." The district just began teaching this way during the pandemic, but prior to that for the past fifteen to twenty years the district had been using [indisc.] equipment and had delivered a CTE video-teleconference conference course. He said that CTE instruction is also provided through "Variable length boarding programs." He explained that these courses have a few components; there are intensives where students come in for five to ten days, take a CTE intensive course, and then return to their home village, or they can come in for an entire semester and enroll in the population of Bethel Regional High School, taking all of the regular core courses, as well as a CTE course or courses in the student's area of study.

MR. STEWART said another way CTE instruction is provided is through an "itinerant instructor." The district has two itinerant positions, only one of which is filled, he shared. The itinerant instructor travels from village to village and provides welding and driver education instruction. Another example he offered of how the district provides CTE is through "third party educational opportunities." He used the example "Alaska Excel" which is a non-profit educational entity that is housed in Anchorage and serves Western Alaska, having started out of Kuspuks School District. He also mentioned using dual-credit opportunities and bringing in instructors from the college to do another form of an intensive. The final format being used to enhance CTE in villages he shared was "homegrown instructors." The district has been advertising for instructors with an area of interest and some background. In construction, for example, he said, the district would bring in a master trainer and train students up to be introductory level shop teachers. This provides opportunities for students that would not normally exist, he said. Then the district is able to advertise to those students some of the other opportunities that are in those fields.

[9:35:29 AM](#)

MR. STEWART presented slide 4, "Challenges with and prior to COVID 19." He reiterated that the district had been trying to build its own CTE instructors, explaining that this is because CTE instructors are very hard to find, keep, and train. He said it is unlikely that a village school would be able to hire a full time CTE instructor on staff. Most instructors must teach a variety of subject matters so that general education can be covered. He explained that typically village schools require some level of travel to access CTE, whether that is sending instructors out to the villages, bringing students in for the boarding program or intensives, or sending them to Anchorage for an Excel Alaska program. Another issue he noted was the revolving administration, not necessarily at the district level, but at the school level, and that can change priorities on how to staff a school. Each principal, he explained, has quite a bit of leverage on how the schools are staffed and what is chosen for instructional programs. The district can provide opportunities, but they will staff the schools how they see fit for current needs, Mr. Stewart said. He stated that when COVID-19 hit, it hit the delta hard, and the schools have been shut down [for in-person learning] for the past year. He explained that that eliminated all travel and made it very difficult to continue the district's go-to CTE instructional ways. He said that in response the district built an intranet. Each home was provided with a GCI antenna that could only connect to the intranet system, he said. This provided the opportunity for Zoom and Noodle, a learning management system on which instructors are able to build and create courses. He clarified that this has been a bandage that lacks the resources used in everyday education. He referenced previous speakers' discussion points, of the ability to teach online courses using a variety of different formats. For his district, however, he said that if a learning tool wasn't on Noodle, the district didn't have access to it.

[9:38:13 AM](#)

MR. STEWART presented slide 5, "Success with Work Based Learning." Work-based learning was able to continue, he said. The district started a partnership with Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC), the regional health corporation, the previous year and was able to continue the program with the help of AHEC coordinators. Students in the health careers path must apply for the program, take a number of classes, and have

positive recommendations from instructors. Because of these quality controls, students coming in have been received very well by department managers at YKHC. He said the district currently has students placed in dental and optometry, and both department managers are very happy with the students and are looking for more students when the district can provide more. Again, he reiterated, with the COVID-19 shutdown many CTE classes were limited. The student pool is small right now for students that would be eligible to apply for the opportunity, he stated. The district, he continued, has future openings planned with other departments as the student pool increases, and the district is hoping to have multiple students in each department willing to take on students. He noted that this is a paid internship, and after going through the logistics with both district lawyers and YKHC lawyers, it was determined that would limit liability and provide employment, and the students are also happy about this opportunity.

[9:40:15 AM](#)

MR. STEWART concluded his presentation with slide 6, "Things learned and strengths moving forward." He stated that the committee has discussed the need for reliable Internet, and shared that he called into the meeting on his phone to be sure he didn't get dropped from the call. He stated that this is a district- and region-wide problem. Internet is extremely expensive, and most village families do not have it because of the extreme costs and limited monthly usage. He explained that the Internet in Bethel is so slow he can hardly check his email. This is an ongoing problem, but he wanted to highlight it. He told the committee that the district has worked on partnerships with tribal entities and is working on one right now to provide at least [high school] seniors with home Internet connectivity so they can work on finishing up their classes and meet with their counselors for post-secondary and career planning.

MR. STEWART said that CTE networking across the state has never been stronger. He referenced connections with associations in CTE. He stated that the district is fortunate to have the network of CTE educators in Alaska. He noted that he was involved in the clearinghouse project previously mentioned by Ms. Riddle which was made up of Alaska ACTE board members. Instructors have asked for a program like this for years, he explained, to see what others are doing and to share and consume content. The next step after the clearinghouse, he continued, is to have information published and easily accessible so CTE educators can connect. He offered the example that if interest

is observed in welding, then the clearinghouse would offer a welding instructor virtual meeting so individuals could further discuss in a live format.

[9:43:51 AM](#)

JONI SIMPSON, Director, CTE, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD), began her presentation on slide 2, entitled, "FNSBSD CTE PATHWAYS, Current & Future." She explained that the programs listed in black on the slide are courses that the district is actively teaching, and those with an asterisk are dual credit opportunities for multiple courses within those pathways. Slide 2 lists the programs in black as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Health Science*
- Emergency Services (EMS/Fire)*
- Architecture & Construction*
- Welding*
- Automotive*(Small Engines, Automotive, Auto Body)
- Culinary Arts
- IT*
- Engineering & Aviation*
- Arts/AV*
- Work Based Learning (Internships Work For Credit)

MS. SIMPSON continued, explaining that the pathways shown in teal on the slide are those that the district is working on developing and adding in the next three to five years. They show on the slide as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Agriculture
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Medical Billing and Coding
- Cosmetology
- Education
- Emergency Services (Law Enforcement & Dispatch)
- Business & Marketing
- Student Business Enterprise
- Cybersecurity, Networking, and Coding (to be added to IT)
- Drones (to be added to Engineering & Aviation)

[9:45:14 AM](#)

MS. SIMPSON presented slide 3, "Industry Recognized Credentials." She explained that each of the district's pathways have industry

recognized credentials built into them. Not only do students leave with industry recognized credentials, but junior and senior years overlap with post-secondary or industry partners to make the transition from high school into the workforce or into post-secondary training seamless. She said these certifications that the students earn give them an advantage moving into the post-secondary world.

MS. SIMPSON presented slide 4, "CTE DURING COVID-19." Like the others have stated, she said, COVID-19 threw the district a curve ball, but being in CTE, the district figured things out. When working in a job or industry, one is presented with challenges every single day, she explained. This challenge was how to deliver hands-on activity through remote distance learning, she stated. The high schools were in remote learning the entire school year until February, when coming back in person became optional with continued remote, she shared. She said FNSBSD worked with Alaska ACTE and the national organization. These organizations put out new information on an almost daily basis on how to maintain high quality CTE programs during a pandemic, she said.

[9:47:13 AM](#)

MS. SIMPSON continued on to slide 5. She said the district had to quickly shift to remote learning, so it worked directly with industries such as the Home Building Institute (HBI), which had shifted quickly from a hands-on model to an online model to make sure the highest of industry standards was available to construction students. The district also worked with a company called Onshape, which made a program similar to AutoCAD to be used on the Chromebooks deployed to all the students. She said the district also worked with industry so students could continue working towards certifications such as [American Welding Society] (AWS), [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] (CPR), and First Aid.

MS. SIMPSON said FNSBDS came up with many mitigation plans and purchased an enormous amount of additional PPE for the students. Many students wanted to come back in person once given the option for their CTE programs. The school bought individual welding hoods for all students, because the hoods could not be sanitized at a level that was safe to share, she shared, which was a big drain on the district's budget.

MS. SIMPSON pointed out that the good thing that came out of the pandemic was that it brought Alaska's CTE community together.

She said there isn't a day that goes by that she is not collaborating with other CTE people from around the state. She has worked with DEED, other CTE directors, teachers, and administrators. She expressed that she hopes these connections continue as schools return to normalcy. She noted that the district has had a recent shift to statewide professional development. The district received a grant through DEED to teach a statewide class for CTE teachers, administrators, and councilors, she shared. The class has 52 people enrolled in it and meets every week to discuss best practice, she explained, to keep everyone moving forward through the pandemic. She reiterated that the district hopes to perpetuate this class beyond the pandemic to encourage more cooperation and professional development.

[9:50:05 AM](#)

MS. SIMPSON moved to slide 6, "Challenges." She stated that one of the problems that CTE has is CTE teacher recruitment. She said it is getting more difficult to recruit CTE teachers and gave a few reasons why. First, in the state of Alaska there are no post-secondary programs educators can go through to become certified CTE teachers. She explained that she was able to get a CTE endorsement while attending college in Montana, but that is not an option in Alaska. Because of this, she shared, [districts] have had to recruit from outside. She shared that the district gets some CTE teachers through Type M Limited Certificates through industry. The shortcomings of this is that individuals coming out of industry cannot earn tenure, often get a worse retirement package, and often can only teach part time, she explained, so these teachers will leave and go back to industry. Even with teachers coming from academia who want to teach CTE as well, the school needs to invest in a lot of academic development to understand the many pathways and industry recognized credentials.

MS. SIMPSON addressed budget issues as a challenge that CTE and the district are facing. She stated that budgets have been steadily decreasing over the past few years. She said it used to be that the state funds were larger than the district's Carl Perkins fund, but over the years they are almost even now. When adding in all the extra costs to run a CTE program, she said FNSBSD is very mindful of its finances. The CTE program also relies on grants to make sure the programs are high quality. She said facilities are always an issue. She explained that it is hard to expand programs because that often requires a

facility expansion, renovation, or modification, which is then another budget consideration.

[9:54:17 AM](#)

MS. SIMPSON directed attention to slide 7, "Aspirations." She said that to be in CTE one has to be an optimist, and one has to be a forward thinker. The CTE program [is looking to expand on a number of fronts], she shared. She offered as an example that the program is expanding the work-based learning options, and stated that the program has pre-apprenticeships in collaboration with the Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center and the district's union partners. She said the program has been very successful and the district hopes to expand that model to healthcare and cosmetology. She said the CTE program also wants to expand its internship program, so it is available in each of the pathways.

MS. SIMPSON said the district is continuing to expand business partnerships. She expressed that the district hopes to reach out to more businesses. She also shared that the district hopes to move to either multiple or alternative graduation pathways. It is a goal to make certain students are gaining credit for their CTE courses while building their high school program, so they can stay in that pathway. She offered the example that a student in an aviation program, who was doing a lot of science and math, was not just receiving elective credits for those courses, rather that student was earning core credits. This helps the students stay engaged in the pathways, she said, all the way through graduation and beyond.

MS. SIMPSON reiterated FNSBSD's intention to expand collaboration within the state. She mentioned that FNSBSD is partnering with Yukon-Koyukuk School District (YKSD) more than ever has been done in the past. She referred to this as "a gift that COVID gave us," and said the district would like to continue that collaboration. Here in the district's backyard, [FNSBSD and YKSD] are going to do some professional development together next fall, she offered.

MS. SIMPSON also said the district plans on strengthening the CTSOs. She informed the committee members that she works with DEED as the state coordinator for CTSOs. Last year, she said, DEED was just ready to do some outreach with Bristol Bay right before COVID-19 hit, and so DEED was unable to do that. She said she hopes not only to strengthen CTSOs in the district, but also statewide, though additional funding will be needed.

[9:58:37 AM](#)

CATHY LECOMPTE, Division Director, Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC), Department of Labor and Workforce Development, began her presentation on slide 1, "AVTEC at a glance." She told the committee members that AVTEC is a division of DLWD. She shared that being part of a state agency is unique compared to other similar programs across the country. The division trains over 1,100 Alaskans annually and had been in operation since 1969, she explained. She also shared that AVTEC is nationally accredited through the Council on Occupational Education. She noted that the division offers many credentials for students to earn.

MS. LECOMPTE directed attention to slide 2, "Our Mission..." which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

AVTEC delivers flexible, accessible, and affordable workforce training that is responsive to the dynamic needs of business and industry and serves Alaska's diverse communities.

[10:00:41 AM](#)

MS. LECOMPTE presented slides 2 and 3, regarding training programs, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Flexible, accessible, & affordable training..

- Occupational Programs provide opportunities for student to gain technical and employability skills to gain employment in entry level positions; trade specific for 90-180 days of training.
- Job upgrade for incumbent workers aimed to increase upward mobility; customized training based on employer and employee needs.
- Continuing Education to maintain employed status through job specific skills training to increase productivity; customized training based on employer and employee needs.

MS. LECOMPTE shared an example of a job upgrade with a partnership that DLWD had with the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) which involved power plant operator and bulk fuels training and person-in-charge, shore-side training on transferring bulk fuels. She stated that there are 132 village power plant organizations that AVTEC worked with on that particular training.

MS. LECOMPTE said the continuing education is currently in the form of related technical instruction, which is the instruction that is required in an apprenticeship for apprentices to supplement and augment their on-the-job training. She said this is mostly for construction and healthcare, and it is all available online.

[10:02:03 AM](#)

MS. LECOMPTE presented slides 4 and 5, "Training at AVTEC is different..." which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- CLOCK HOURS NOT CREDIT HOURS:
- Workplace simulation in chosen career field; over 1,000 hours of training in 38 weeks.
- DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCY:
- No grades, 90% demonstrated mastery of skills and earned industry credentials.
- TECHNICAL & EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS EMBEDDED:
- Technical and employability skills such as job search, interviewing skills and resume writing part of the training.
- JOB SEARCH & EMPLOYMENT:
- Up to one year after training is complete, job search and employment assistance is available.

MS. LECOMPTE presented slide 6, "Responsive to dynamic needs of business..." which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Occupational Advisory Committees
- Comprised of employers and subject matter experts from business and industry.
- Meet or connect regularly to conduct review of training content and provide feedback to ensure what students are learning is what they need in the workplace.
- Visit classrooms to make presentations to students and to recruit students for employment.
- Contribute money and equipment via education tax credits to support the resource needs of the programs.

MS. LECOMPTE gave one example relating to AVTEC's information technology (IT) department. She explained that IT students used

to learn to build computers, but the employer feedback expressed a need for cloud computing and security instead.

[10:05:27 AM](#)

MS. LECOMPTE presented slides 7 and 8, "AVTEC Occupational Programs," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Culinary Arts*
- Construction Technology*
- Diesel / Heavy Equipment Technology
- Industrial Welding
- Information Technology Networking*
- Business & Office Technology*
- Industrial Electricity*
- Plumbing & Heating
- Refrigeration*

MS. LECOMPTE indicated the programs with an asterisk that were more successful with pivoting [during the pandemic]. She continued that with the type of training offered, students are hands-on with their work, so it is very difficult to transition to an online environment in such a short period of time; however, this was managed with some programs. She used the culinary arts program as an example, explaining that they were able to do their nutrition class online. She said that when AVTEC quit training in March 2020 and sent everyone home, many classes were close to completion, so the program was able to facilitate getting many students jobs. The construction class is a four-month program that was about half way through, so those students were brought back to finish up, she explained. Many instructors made videos, she continued. Diesel and Industrial Welding has two starts, in August and in January, so the August start was ready to go, so AVTEC got them connected and employed, and those who began in January were invited back in the fall, she explained.

MS. LECOMPTE said that information technology and networking moved easily online and have been very successful in that environment. Business and office technology has moved back and forth [between online and in-person learning] which has been done adeptly, she said. Industrial electricity also was able to go back and forth because there was a lot of computation and reading of code she explained. She reiterated that while some of these programs lend themselves to online delivery, there

still must be some of the hands-on component, so students were brought back for intensives in the fall.

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MS. LECOMPTE directed attention to slide 9, "Alaska Maritime Training Center*." She said the programs that she just shared are occupational programs [where students go from] zero employable skills to employable in less than ten months or to "a career in less than a year." The Alaska Maritime Training Center (AMTC), she explained, is a different form of delivery, consisting of more short-term courses. There are over 40 U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) approved courses available for both beginner and advanced training, she shared. The Alaska Maritime Training Center has been able to pivot to online delivery in many of its courses through USCG approval, she said. In addition to that, Ms. LeCompte said, AVTEC has pioneered a new program called "Proctorio," one of only two maritime training programs in the country that is USCG approved to use this software, which allows for remote proctoring of exams. She explained that students still needed to be physically present for licensing exams, but this software allowed students to remotely take proctored exams.

MS. LECOMPTE pointed out the pathway on the slide that students take in the AMTC program. First was "Youth Outreach/Pre-Apprentice," next was "Licenses/Certifications," and finally "Advanced Training." She told committee members that the trainings at AMTC are equivalent to those that a student would receive at a maritime academy. She explained that this program takes a little longer than [academies], as students go out, get sea time, then learn, license, and advance. She shared that one student has advanced to the level of "sea pilot" through AVTEC training.

[10:10:05 AM](#)

MS. LECOMPTE moved to slide 10, "Maritime Career Pathway..." She shared that the Maritime career pathway is the best developed pathway that AVTEC has. The program has a high school course, "Introduction to Nautical Skills," that is taught via distance and gives students an opportunity to see what a maritime career would look like. If a student is successful in that course, AVTEC has Perkins post-secondary funding that pays for the student to get basic training, she said, and when the students complete that, they are employable and can get internships or

apprenticeships. She highlighted the "Senior Year to Career," which allows high school seniors to start at AVTEC early.

10:11:30 AM

MS. LECOMPTE moved on to slides 11 and 12, "Non-credit to credit pathways..." She shared that AVTEC partners with UAF so students in business information and IT can purchase credits from UAF and apply those credits toward earning an Associate of Applied Science in IT or business. Ms. LeCompte highlighted a similar program at UAS where mariners can buy credits with licenses earned at AVTEC to apply to an Associate in Applied Science in marine transportation or power technology.

MS. LECOMPTE introduced slide 13, "Covid-10 response priorities." She said AVTEC's pathways go from high school to post-secondary, and the program's goal is to give Alaskans more options, so they can go to school, get an apprenticeship, or go to work.

10:12:46 AM

MS. LECOMPTE stated that AVTEC's number one COVID-19-related priority has been the health and safety of students and staff. She shared that students were sent home on March 18, 2020, and AVTEC accommodated students to gain employment and get access to training. She said that AVTEC restarted in the fall and brought students back in the program's "COVID Enrollment Model," which allowed for social distancing and required masking, among a number of other protocols. She shared that although a few students got sick, the school never had to shut down, and there have been no new cases this spring.

MS. LECOMPTE presented slide 14, "Challenges," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Budget - due to reduced enrollments for health and safety of students
- Uncertainty of what next during the pandemic
- Bridging the digital divide for staff and students

MS. LECOMPTE noted that the CARES Act funding helped but didn't fill all the budget gaps. She said the CARES Act funding helped with the digital divide.

MS. LECOMPTE concluded her presentation with slide 15, "Student Success," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- FIVE YEAR AVERAGE COMPLETION RATE OVER 90%
- WITH LITTLE OR NO STUDENT LOAN DEBT
- FIVE YEAR EMPLOYMENT RATE AT NEARLY 90%
- FUTURE EARNING POTENTIAL OVER 60% MORE THAN BEFORE COMPLETING TRAINING
- RETURN ON INVESTMENT
- AVTEC RANKED IN TOP 10% FOR ROI* BY GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

MS. LECOMPTE said when students come to AVTEC they know what they want to do, which lends itself to student success.

[10:18:07 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.