

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 9, 2021
8:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Grier Hopkins

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 132

"An Act relating to technical education and apprenticeships; relating to concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs for students enrolled in public secondary schools; relating to child labor; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 108

"An Act relating to concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs for students enrolled in public secondary schools; relating to child labor; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 19

"An Act relating to instruction in a language other than English; and establishing limited language immersion teacher certificates."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 132

SHORT TITLE: SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIP PROGS; TAX CREDITS
SPONSOR(s): LABOR & COMMERCE

03/10/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/10/21 (H) L&C, EDC, FIN
03/15/21 (H) L&C AT 6:30 PM BARNES 124
03/15/21 (H) Heard & Held
03/15/21 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
03/22/21 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
03/22/21 (H) Moved CSHB 132(L&C) Out of Committee
03/22/21 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
03/22/21 (H) L&C AT 6:30 PM DAVIS 106
03/22/21 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
03/25/21 (H) L&C RPT CS(L&C) NT 5DP 1AM
03/25/21 (H) DP: SNYDER, SCHRAGE, MCCARTY,
SPOHNHOLZ, FIELDS
03/25/21 (H) AM: NELSON
04/09/21 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 108

SHORT TITLE: CONCURRENT SECONDARY & TRADE SCHOOL
SPONSOR(s): MCCARTY

02/22/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/22/21 (H) EDC, L&C, FIN
04/09/21 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 19

SHORT TITLE: LIMITED TEACHER CERTIFICATES; LANGUAGES
SPONSOR(s): KREISS-TOMKINS

02/18/21 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
02/18/21 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/21 (H) EDC, L&C
04/09/21 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE ZACK FIELDS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented CSHB 132(L&C) on behalf of the sponsor, the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee, on which he serves as co-chair.

MARI SELLE, Director
South Central Alaska Health Education Center

Alaska Primary Care Association
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of CSHB 132(L&C).

REPRESENTATIVE KEN MCCARTY
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HB 108.

DENEEN TUCK, Staff
Representative Ken McCarty
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sectional analysis for HB 108 on behalf of Representative McCarty, prime sponsor.

BRAD AUSTIN, Apprenticeship Coordinator
Plumbers, Pipefitters & Southeast Mechanical Contractors
Apprenticeship Program
Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local 262
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of HB 108.

JIM ANDERSON, CFO
Anchorage School District
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of HB 108.

REPRESENTATIVE JONATHAN KREISS-TOMKINS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced HB 19.

LINDSAY BURKE, Staff
Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 19 on behalf of Representative Kreiss-Tomkins, prime sponsor.

REID MAGDANZ
Alaska Native Languages Advocate
Kotzebue, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of HB 19.

MICHAEL JOHNSON, Commissioner
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of HB
19

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:02:19 AM](#)

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

HB 132-SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIP PROGS; TAX CREDITS

[8:03:15 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 132, "An Act relating to technical education and apprenticeships; relating to concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs for students enrolled in public secondary schools; relating to child labor; and providing for an effective date." [Before the committee was CSHB 123(L&C)]

[8:03:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZACH FIELDS, Alaska State Legislature, presented CSHB 132(L&C) on behalf of the sponsor, the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee, on which he serves as co-chair. He stated that apprenticeships are part of a larger ecosystem and shared that the goal of the proposed legislation was to expand apprenticeship and school-to-apprenticeship linkages, so more Alaska youth can enter living wage careers that have nationally recognized post-secondary credentials, including college credit and apprenticeship.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS shared that Alaska has high performing apprenticeship programs in the traditional building trades, and recent innovation with apprenticeship in new industries. He opined that Alaska has fantastic career and technical education (CTE) programs in its school districts, including some school-to-apprenticeship linkage programs. He explained that the school-to-apprenticeship programs' volume is not sufficient to

meet demand. In the last 10 years, he said, there has been a focus across party lines and through administrations on expanding apprenticeship and CTE with support from the congressional delegation.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS argued that expansion of CTE helps "people pull themselves up by their bootstraps" and avoid college debt. He shared that he is from a poor family and opined that people shouldn't have to choose between postsecondary credentials and a career. He stated that some people cannot afford not to work, need to have a job, and they must complete either an apprenticeship program, college credit, or ideally both.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS noted that Alaska is in a fiscally constrained position, but federal resources for apprenticeship are expanding. He shared that Alaska is completing an application for State Apprenticeship Expansion and Innovation (SAEI) grants, and CSHB 132(L&C) would put policy in place to capitalize on the federal investment.

[8:06:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS said CSHB 132(L&C) would incentivize employer participation with \$1,000 per apprentice in an employer tax credit. He shared that this is based on a model from South Carolina, where it was found that apprenticeship can be scaled up by incentivizing employer participation and linking it to the school system. He commented that the legislature could learn from that model and expand apprenticeship beyond traditional building trades. He noted that there was a \$1,500 credit for veterans entering apprenticeship.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS explained that the second thing CSHB 132(L&C) would do is direct the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) and the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) to collaborate in technical and financial support for school apprenticeship, science, math, and engineering CTE programs. He noted that DLWD has supported apprenticeship for a long time, and cited examples back to Governor Frank Murkowski and also nodded to work by Senator Click Bishop from his time as commissioner of DLWD. He noted however, that there had not been a statutory directive to DEED to support apprenticeship. Representative Fields commented that as exemplified by international best practices for apprenticeship, Alaska needed to better link vocational education with higher education. He shared that the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee worked with DEED on the proposed

legislation, and that it is supportive of CTE and apprenticeship.

[8:09:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS stated that the University of Alaska (UA) system has pioneered examples of college credit and apprenticeship, including in the automotive industry. He said this proposed legislation directed the university to support [college credit for apprenticeship] and noted that there was a forthcoming amendment to change the language in a way UA supports. He emphasized the importance of linking college and apprenticeship.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS said CSHB 132(L&C) has a wide range of support, and listed entities in favor of the proposed legislation, including Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), the Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association (ASHNHA), the Alaska Primary Care Association (APCA), the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District (MSBSD), and some individual employers and unions. He noted that whether non-union or union, building trades, or healthcare, the proposed legislation had support from a broad range of stakeholders.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS summarized that CSHB 132(L&C) would incentivize employer participation with a tax credit and a bonus tax credit for veterans, encourages cross departmental collaboration between DLWD and DEED, supports school districts' work to expand school-to-apprenticeship programs, and provides statutory support for UA to continue expanding its college credit for apprenticeship programs.

[8:12:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked if there was a minimum age to begin an apprenticeship.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS replied that it depended on the student and the program. He offered that someone ages 16-18 could be in a registered apprenticeship program and a middle college high school program. He stated that in some occupations one can't work before turning 18, so it would depend on the profession. He shared that in other cases many Alaska schools have school-to-college linkage programs, which prepare a student to enter an apprenticeship program upon graduating high school. He offered that in this scenario, the intention is to link college credit to the program.

8:13:51 AM

MARI SELLE, Director, South Central Alaska Health Education Center (SCAHEC), Alaska Primary Care Association (APCA), testified in favor of CSHB 132(L&C). She shared that the proposed legislation has the potential to open doors for youth to enter health and human services careers. She told the committee that APCA has been a multi-agency sponsor for registered apprenticeships since 2017. The program was built with the United States Department of Labor's (DoL's) American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) and the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, managed by DLWD. She explained that APCA is a multi-agency sponsor that works with different healthcare employers, many of whom are community health centers. The various employers employ the apprentices, and APCA manages the apprenticeship program for its partners, she said. She stated this is a system where students get paid while they learn.

MS. SELLE shared that about 25 percent of the program's apprentices are youths ages 18-24. She said APCA has a partnership with Alaska Works on a youth apprenticeship program to increase the availability of apprenticeships. She offered that APCA also works with school districts to get youth into its apprenticeship programs. She commented that there is a lot of energy at the moment to create apprenticeships for youth, and she believes CSHB 132(L&C) will help take everything to the next level. She said this model of apprenticeship works well for people who are going into entry level jobs. She explained that this is because healthcare facilities are mentoring and training new staff. She said the recruitment pool for entry level jobs, especially in rural Alaska, is limited so employers must often hire individuals without experience. The apprenticeship model provides the missing piece of structured, formal education that leads to a certification and takes people with no experience and puts them on a great career path, she opined. Ms. Selle noted that APCA partners with Alaska Pacific University (APU), so all participants earn college credit and an undergraduate certificate at the successful completion of their apprenticeship. That certificate can lead to an associate degree or bachelor's degree, launching the student into a career.

MS. SELLE reiterated her support for the proposed legislation and said she felt that the tax credit incentive was a key component. She shared that one of APCA's challenges has been having more willing students than employers. She pointed out

the burden of mentorship and working with young, inexperienced people, but she believed the financial incentive would help employers "take the plunge."

[8:19:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX looked for clarification regarding if the apprenticeship program would establish guidelines in the health care industry to measure an apprentice's experience and knowledge in a specific field.

MS. SELLE replied that there are two components to an apprenticeship. She said there is an on-the-job learning component with many metrics that one must meet. She said there is also a related technical instruction (RTI) component, which is classroom learning. She explained that it is similar to a college class in which there are learning objectives that one must meet. She shared that APCA's apprenticeships are one to two years, and about 25-40 weeks are spent in a virtual classroom for 1-2 hours per week.

[8:21:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS added that apprenticeship is regulated by DoL, so for any given occupation there are "standards of apprenticeship" which govern the skills taught on the job and RTI. He emphasized that the standards of apprenticeship are consistent for any occupation across the United States, which gives a guarantee of quality across sponsors.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked how a university or school education program interfaced with an employer to give credits and accreditation.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS replied that the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the region's accrediting body, has long worked with universities. He explained that an institution of higher education must look at an apprenticeship program and determine whether the related technical instruction and the on-the-job learning align with a college degree program. The college can then either use an existing instructor, such as one from APCA, for the program, or have college professors deliver the RTI in a traditional college setting, he said. He explained that NWCCU accommodates that range of options.

[8:23:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked Ms. Selle how CSHB 132(L&C) would help existing apprenticeship programs. He commented that he completed a union apprenticeship without needing college credits.

MS. SELLE answered that healthcare apprenticeships are new. She said she believed the proposed legislation would help school districts strengthen apprenticeship programs and bring awareness to the value of apprenticeships to both school districts and employers. She commented that the financial incentive would intrigue employers. She said there are differences among different trades and said carpentry was an example of having a long history of established apprenticeships, while healthcare was still in the process of making apprenticeship an established norm. She emphasized that retention and recruitment in healthcare is an issue and has been for a long time. She suggested that this could be a tool to train an a highly skilled and qualified workforce.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS added that in South Carolina where similar proposed legislation had passed, the \$1000 incentive was enough to incentivize employers to try the program, which then paid for itself with reduced turnover and higher productivity. He described it as an inducement that allowed employers to experiment.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked if the \$1,000 incentive was one-time or repeated.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS replied that it is a one-time incentive.

[8:27:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS presented the sectional analysis of CSHB 132(L&C). He said Section 1 names the bill the Alaska Apprenticeship Expansion Act; Section 2 adds duties to DEED and states that it must collaborate with DLWD to provide financial and technical support to school districts. He commented that DEED has primarily supported CTE with the Carl D. Perkins grant, which is insufficient to scale up school-to-apprenticeship programs. He said this makes the statutory direction necessary, because DEED will have to think creatively beyond the Perkins grant. Section 3 provides statutory support to UA to collaborate with DEED on apprenticeships aligned with higher education, he explained. Section 4 is the registered apprentice tax credit, he said.

[8:29:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND commented that Ms. Selle had said COVID-19 did not disrupt the remote instruction but did not mention how it affected on the job training. She asked for discussion on healthcare training during the pandemic.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS replied that APCA was well positioned because they have a robust system for digital communication including video from the APCA headquarters in Anchorage, Alaska. He said in terms of the participating community health centers, the health centers needed to identify the mentor for a given apprentice in one of APCA's five apprenticeship programs. He clarified that APCA is an umbrella organization that includes numerous health care organizations throughout the state.

[8:31:53 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY asked how the program would work for smaller village schools.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS pointed to a teaching program in the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) with registered apprenticeship embedded in it. He said LKSD identifies people who want to become elementary education teachers and allows them to start as an apprentice, either as an associate teacher or a teacher's aide. Students then work through apprenticeship while completing their University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Early Education distance delivered program. He explained that these participants are earning a wage while working towards a college degree.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS offered a second example with building trades. He said someone working in construction may complete apprenticeship hours in different communities. He also suggested there are rural residents who attend apprenticeship training at a training center in Anchorage or Fairbanks.

[8:33:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked if individuals joining apprenticeships would be required to join unions.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS replied no, apprenticeship as a system works for both union and non-union employers. He said apprenticeship programs can be sponsored by a single employer or multiple employers. He gave Red Dog Mine as an example of a

single-employer, non-union apprenticeship program sponsor. He said it has multiple apprenticeships and is a world leader in terms of apprenticeship. He offered APCA and ABC as non-union, multi-employer examples. He said there are also single-employer union programs and mentioned employees at the Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, which has employees represented by International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1574 and started an apprentice program in partnership with the union. He explained that traditional building trades, such as carpentry, are the multi-employer unions. He summarized that all four models exist, and apprenticeship training is open to anyone. He said some of the new innovative programs are still developing standards of apprenticeship, which is what Dol and DLWD did with APCA and the Red Dog Mine.

[8:36:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND said she would like to see a chart of the four models Representative Fields had described. She commented that she had seen a chart by the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Alaska that compared apprenticeship wages while working and learning to college wages while working and learning, along with the debt at the end of either program. She asked if he could provide something similar to show the benefits of the program.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS replied that all apprenticeship programs have a wage progression. He said the traditional building trades with AGC typically offer 60 percent of wages for the first year of apprenticeship, 70 percent for the second year, then 80 and 90 with a four-year apprenticeship. He explained that as an apprentice learns, he/she earns higher wages. He suggested this is instrumental for a win-win for both the employer and the employee. He referenced a study from the Palin Administration on apprenticeship, Alaska hiring, and wages. He suggested it had compelling data about apprenticeship leading to living wages.

[8:39:08 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY asked about the fiscal note. She observed that DLWD and DEED appeared to be able to build these partnerships with the current structure. She also commented that she was curious how it extended into post-secondary high school programs.

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS replied that DEED and DLWD told his office that both already wanted to support apprenticeship, so adding statutory support did not add cost. He said the cost in CSHB 132(L&C) is going to be the tax credit.

CO-CHAIR STORY concluded by adding that CTE is one of DEED's five priorities of Alaska's Education Challenge.

[HB 132 was held over.]

[8:40:56 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:40 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.

HB 108-CONCURRENT SECONDARY & TRADE SCHOOL

[8:45:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 108, "An Act relating to concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs for students enrolled in public secondary schools; relating to child labor; and providing for an effective date."

[8:45:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KEN MCCARTY, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 108. He said that in secondary education, Alaska offers concurrent enrollment to enter college courses, but the state does not offer the same for trade classes. He explained that if a student wanted to pursue a trade format, he/she would have to do so independent of the secondary education experience. He explained that HB 108 would resolve the issue so a student could do concurrent enrollment in trade and recognize that it is done by industry recognized trade experts.

[8:47:50 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:47 a.m. to 8:48 a.m.

[8:48:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY added that the proposed legislation opens up opportunities for the tactile learning process.

[8:49:06 AM](#)

DENEEN TUCK, Staff, Representative Ken McCarty, Alaska State Legislature, presented the sectional analysis for HB 108 on behalf of Representative McCarty, prime sponsor. She stated, "Going over the sectional analysis, there's one thing that I'd like to point out, and that will come up in the presentation. We talk about the Department of Education in here, but we have learned since talking with Mr. Anderson at the Anchorage School District that districts are already doing this. So, we would like to replace 'The Department of Education' with 'each district,' and we'll talk about that as we move along in the bill."

MS. TUCK said Section 1 adds criminal history checks for instructors of students in trades, on-the-job-training, or apprenticeship. Section 2, she explained, instructs DEED/school districts to provide students CTE opportunities. Section 3 adds six new sections to AS 14.35. First, it makes it so those aged 14 years or older may participate in concurrent vocational education programs, she shared. Second, it instructs the school district to contract with external programs for on-the-job style instruction, requires a published list of available programs, allows for enrollment in the program, mandates individual learning plans for students, and requires instructor certification. Ms. Tuck said that Section 4 amends the requirements for supervision of an employed minor, Section 5 lowers the employment age to 16 years old, Section 6 allows minors to work to 10 p.m., and Section 7 provides for an effective date.

[8:55:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked if brothers-in-law or sisters-in-law would count as extended family referred to in Section 4.

MS. TUCK replied that she and Representative McCarty would have no objections if Representative Drummond would propose that as an amendment.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY added that the language "the department or district" could be part of the amendment.

[8:56:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked how HB 108 interfaced with CSHB 132(L&C) and how it was different.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY replied that CSHB 132(L&C) was mostly for individuals seeking apprenticeship who were 18 and older. He explained that HB 108 captured all secondary school-age kids who didn't fit into the category of CSHB 132(L&C). He commented that this was a "synergy of different bills that had come together for workability." He explained that a student at age 14 could start the process towards workability and would get industry recognized certifications in that process. He suggested students could graduate at 18 and be offered a \$100,000 [annual paying] job.

[8:58:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM asked what the "domestic work" in Section 6 of the bill entailed.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY replied that the current statute says the criteria listed does not apply to a baby-sitter or to housework, so a babysitter could work until 2 a.m. What this proposed legislation does is address the current statute that says student youth must be off the clock by 9 p.m. He said this section extended that time by one hour, but there were still the same time frames. He offered an example of a Juneau resident who owned several movie theaters and had to send youth employees home at 9 p.m., even with movies still going.

REPRESENTATIVE GILLHAM related anecdotally that his son started working 10-hour days on his charter boat at age eight for seven days a week. He commented that limiting fishing families to 23 hours a week is a hindrance and said that in the fishing industry, people wouldn't keep to 23 hours.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY replied that Representative Gillham's particular concern has been raised often. He commented that when the youth is working for a parent that puts it in a "whole different paradigm."

MS. TUCK added the 23 hours was already in statute, and HB 108 would not change that. She explained that the only thing the proposed legislation would change would be to allow youth to work one hour later.

[9:02:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked if 10 p.m. was late enough, especially in Alaska summer considering the "geographic advantage to daylight."

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY replied it was also an issue with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) child labor laws at the federal level. He said there had been an attempt previously to make a shift to expand the available youth working hours to both earlier in the morning and later at night, which was shut down due to federal regulation.

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND commented that these were "baby steps while we train OSHA that Alaska is part of the United States but has a totally different ... latitudinal experience."

[9:04:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY gave a PowerPoint presentation on HB 108. He overviewed slide 2, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Gives high school students age 14 and up, concurrent enrollment opportunity for vocational education with industry-standard instruction and certification.
- Ensures that students receive the best training by requiring an industry standard master skill certification for instructors.
- Trade programs contracted with school districts must prove that their instruction meets agency accredited national or regional standards.
- Gives equal opportunity to all students who wish to participate.
- Will raise attendance and graduation rates and produce a stronger workforce with skilled experience and work ethic.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY stated this wasn't something new; it was something that the state already wanted to do.

[9:07:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY directed attention to slide 4, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Youth & Workforce Engagement

- Less 0.5% of Alaska's Active Apprentices are under 18
- In 2019 only 35% of teens ages 16-19 were part of the U.S Workforce

- A 25% decrease in teen workers from the peak in 1979 when 60% of Teens ages 16-19 held down part-time jobs

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY said there has been a large drop of participation in the workforce and offered anecdotes from various states. He moved to slide 5 and commented that CTE education is a national trend, and HB 108 is in line with that movement. He presented slide 6, which showed findings from a study performed by the American Student Association (ASA) and Bellwether Education Partners on work-based learning policies. He observed that Alaska has improvements to make. He stated that with HB 108, CSSB 32(FIN), and CSHB 132(L&C), the legislature would make great strides.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY presented slide 7. He shared that HB 108 supports "Program Lists." He said DEED is already asking for vocational trade lists, which he explained the industry already has. He pointed to "Instructor Certification," and said that there are already instructors, and he explained the certification process which would allow industry standard professionals to teach in the classroom. Lastly, he directed attention to "Program Contracts." He said that many Alaska schools have programs and materials, but some do not. He suggested these programs could happen with neighborhood businesses and offered an anecdote from when he ran a special needs school which offered sewing classes with a local business.

[9:11:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY moved to slide 8 and explained that funding came from base student allocation (BSA) funding, and no special funding was needed for the proposed legislation. He presented slide 9 and addressed the term "higher education." He shared his view that higher education is any education that builds a career.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY presented slides 10-13 and discussed seven benefits of trade skills and vocational education. The first benefit he presented was the ability to start young at age 14. The second benefit he pointed out was having smaller classes and like-minded peers, which he likened to the relationships built in a sports team setting. He offered the next two benefits: career service opportunities from specific training and the cost benefit of industry level pay. He pointed out the impact of hands-on training. The last two benefits he mentioned were job placement and faster workforce certification.

[9:14:41 AM](#)

BRAD AUSTIN, Apprenticeship Coordinator, Plumbers, Pipefitters & Southeast Mechanical Contractors Apprenticeship Program, Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Local 262 provided invited testimony in favor of HB 108. He shared with the committee that he was also representing the Alaska Pipe Trades, Local 375 in Fairbanks and Local 367 in Anchorage, all three of which are multi-employer union programs that run federally registered apprenticeship programs. He explained that with that, comes a set of rules called the "Standard of Apprenticeship." He commented that one part of that is the on-the-job training component, and the other component is the related technical instruction. He shared that Local 262's training program has 240 hours a year, adding up to six weeks of instruction including formal classroom training, from math to more advanced skills such as medical gas installation, which involves a certificate. He stated that there is a wage progression, with the program starting at 50 percent of journeyman scale for first year apprentices, and then every six months there is a raise and an advancement within the program. He noted that the program was five years long, 10,000 hours, and completes with a state plumbing test.

MR. AUSTIN commented that electrician and plumber apprentices must be registered in order to obtain a trainee card, and that the state tracks the hours. Once an apprentice reaches 8,000 hours, the individual may take the state test. He opined that it is much like school and shared that there are monthly grade cards given by the journeyman who oversees an apprentice. He shared that the grade card also documents the hours and the processes completed by the apprentice. The grade cards are reviewed, and then it is decided whether an apprentice is ready for advancement, he explained. He compared it to a freshman becoming a sophomore in high school. He shared that the Plumber's and Pipefitters apprenticeship is registered as a post-secondary exempt training facility with DEED. He mentioned that college credits were also involved with the apprenticeship program and noted that the union had agreements with two universities and two community colleges, along with UA.

MR. AUSTIN asserted that these are great careers, and said the apprentices begin at \$19.41 an hour when starting with no training. He said HB 108 would provide opportunities for students who may not realize there are high paying careers in the plumbing and pipefitting industry. He requested that "registered apprenticeship" be added to the bill next to "on-

the-job" trade experience to "open it up" and add clarity regarding these programs.

[9:21:43 AM](#)

JIM ANDERSON, CFO, Anchorage School District (ASD), testified in favor of HB 108. He shared that the Anchorage School Board's three goals are: reading proficiency; math proficiency; and life, college, and career readiness upon graduation. He asserted that those goals would be reinforced by the proposed legislation. He stated that HB 108 strengthens the state's focus to provide high school students an opportunity to receive industry-standard training so they will have viable skills for a trade upon graduation. He also noted that the bill addressed the partnership with businesses in many areas that may not have state certified apprentice programs. He said ASD has split its work-based learning opportunities into two areas: internships and job shadowing. He stated that internships with businesses have allowed many students to develop skills that enable them to receive jobs immediately following graduation. He said the district has partnered with 93 business, some of which are local union apprentice programs although the vast majority are not, in 21 distinct career fields, such as art design, bio-medical, telecommunications, horticulture, carpentry, veterinary assistants, welding, collision repair, and many more. He shared that ASD was expanding an intern program within its business units so that soon students would be able to build skills in maintenance, information technology, human resources, and nutrition. He explained that students participating in these programs receive course credit, and he noted that the partnerships were nearly always available at no cost to the district.

MR. ANDERSON said Alaska's future depended on ensuring that students who don't attend college have pathways to start careers upon graduating high school. He shared that in 2019 prior to the pandemic, ASD had 126 students participate in intern programs with district partners and another 190 students who participated in job shadowing. He said that state registered apprenticeships are a small part of the district's workforce development, with five to eight students entering a state registered apprenticeship at age 18, but noted that the other industry partnership programs have three times the employment rate upon graduation. Mr. Anderson reiterated that HB 108 supports the Anchorage School Board's goal of having student's life, college, and career ready upon graduation, and [ASD] strongly supports the bill.

[9:25:32 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced HB 108 was held over.

HB 19-LIMITED TEACHER CERTIFICATES; LANGUAGES

[9:26:15 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 19, "An Act relating to instruction in a language other than English; and establishing limited language immersion teacher certificates."

[9:26:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced HB 19. He shared that this is the third legislature he has carried a version of the proposed legislation in, noting that the first version passed 40-0 in the House, but did not make it through the Senate, and during the Thirty-first Alaska State Legislature, COVID-19 truncated session. He called HB 19 an important piece of proposed legislation and the actionable thing the legislature could do to support Alaska Native language revitalization for the districts and communities that are seeking to create immersion language programs.

[9:28:25 AM](#)

LINDSAY BURKE, Staff, Representative Kreiss-Tomkins, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 19 on behalf of Representative Kreiss-Tomkins, prime sponsor. She explained that high-level immersion programs are an education model used widely across the country and increasingly in Alaska. In these programs, at least 50 percent of the learning is conducted in a target language, such as Spanish, German, or Yup'ik. She shared that there is a limited pool of fully certified teachers who have the necessary language abilities, but there are many fluent speakers who are suited for the program but do not have the full certification for reasons such as limited English ability, advanced age, or familial responsibility. The proposed legislation would ease that burden by amending the state's limited teacher certificate program and allowing certificates to be issued at the request of the school district for teachers with a specific subject area expertise, in which there are few fully certified and trained teachers.

MS. BURK said HB 19 would authorize the State Board of Education and Early Development to create a new type of limited certificate, specific to teaching in a language immersion program. The board would be authorized to author regulations to ensure the certificate holder demonstrates instructional skills in subject matter or expertise sufficient to assure the public that the person is competent as a teacher, she said. Under HB 19, the board would be empowered to write the regulations and create the certificate, but would not be required to do so, and the school districts would retain local control whether to apply for a certificate on behalf of a teacher, she explained. She informed the committee that a limited certificate would be good for a one-year probationary period, with an option for renewal, pending the school district's affirmation of the holder's educational skills and subject matter expertise. She concluded that HB 19 was drafted to address the specific need faced by the language immersion program and to strengthen the program.

[9:31:23 AM](#)

REID MAGDANZ, Alaska Native Languages Advocate, provided invited testimony in support of HB 19. He provided the committee his personal background to give context to his testimony. He shared that his parents moved to Alaska from California and Nebraska and raised him in Kotzebue, where he graduated from high school in 2008. He said he left Alaska for college but returned in 2014 to work as legislative staff to Representative Kreiss-Tompkins. After five years with the legislature, he returned to Kotzebue where he is now an educator and construction worker. Mr. Magdanz shared that he is learning Inupiaq and is talking with people around the state about the education system and the early stages of an effort to help schools better serve students, especially in rural Alaska.

MR. MAGDANZ said his comments on HB 19 are reflective of his experience, particularly in Alaska schools and working on Alaska Native language revitalization for the past six years. He noted that he speaks primarily from the Rural Alaska perspective. He stated that HB 19 would address what he understood as the most important barrier to academic success for rural Alaska students. He said rural Alaska students, often Alaska Native students, go to schools with teachers and administrators that do not look like them, behave like them, and have not lived like them, and then must learn from curriculums divorced from the place and reality in which those students live. He shared an anecdote about a teacher in Kotzebue whose curriculum instructed her to

teach about subways, even though snow machines would have been more applicable and easier to understand for the students. He opined it was no wonder that students become disinterested in school and learning, which he shared he saw happen to his classmates as he grew up in Kotzebue. He noted that rural Alaska also has some Alaska Native teachers and non-Native teachers who have lived in rural Alaska for a long time.

[9:35:29 AM](#)

MR. MAGDANZ challenged the committee to consider what could be done to make school more relevant and improve the academic success of rural Alaska students. He asserted that bringing Native language and Native culture to the center of the educational experience can make a real difference. He suggested that not only do students, both Native and non-Native, become more grounded in who they are, but they also do better in math, science, writing, and reading. He said there are decades of research reinforcing this, and he referenced the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI), and the writings of Ray Barnhardt and Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley. He opined that the best preparation for education is a life in the students' communities, not a university teacher program in the Lower 48. He argued that HB 19 provides a path for school districts to get those teachers into the classrooms within the regulatory parameters established by DEED and the State Board of Education and Early Development.

MR. MAGDANZ concluded his testimony with an anecdote sharing that Kotzebue has an Inupiaq immersion school run by the local tribal government. He said it has been in operation for 23 years and teaches children ages 3-7, and to his understanding did not have any state certified teachers, because there were none that spoke the language. He said when these students transfer to public school, they often lead their classes in academic performance. Although he admitted it was a small sample, he said it was a promise of what HB 19 could deliver.

[9:38:34 AM](#)

MICHAEL JOHNSON, Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development, provided invited testimony in support of HB 19. He stated that the cornerstone of an education starts with learning language, including learning to read, and that students thrive when their learning, culture, and conscience are integrated. He argued that HB 19 gives needed flexibility to school districts to hire more teachers who are qualified to teach in language

immersion programs, which can better integrate culture into classrooms.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON said HB 19 aligned with the goals of the Alaska Education Challenge, and said it fit well with the goal to have all students read at grade level by the end of third grade. He stated that a comprehensive reading policy in Alaska that improves student outcomes will include more immersion schools, and therefore be dependent on more immersion teachers. He said the proposed legislation meets the goal to increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet workforce needs. He argued that the economic wellbeing of Alaska students and the state can be improved with language revitalization programs. He continued that HB 19 fit the goal to close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources, because more teachers qualified to teach immersion programs would help close the achievement gap. He said the proposed legislation would also meet the goal of attracting and recruiting effective educators. He shared that there is research that language revitalization can help improve the safety and wellbeing of students as they become more engaged in their education and goals.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON said DEED's goal is to provide an excellent education for every student, every single day. With fewer individuals entering Alaska teacher preparation programs and applying for teaching jobs, more than two-thirds of Alaska teachers come from out of state, and he said more Alaskans were needed in the classroom. He said the proposed legislation provides quantity by establishing an additional pathway for local school boards to recognize emerging teachers with expertise in a language other than English, and that it addresses quality by allowing the local school boards to request the issuance of a limited language immersion teacher certificate that is only valid in a language immersion program. He explained that by establishing the length of the certificate to only one year, the local board retains the option to extend or renew the certificate.

[9:42:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND referred to language on page 2 of HB 19, lines 24-30. She asked why a language that is not an Alaska Native language can be certified for a cumulative period not to exceed four years, while an Alaska Native language may be certified for a cumulative period that may exceed four years.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS replied the previous legislative body had a concern that districts would use the limited certificate ad infinitum and felt that a maximum length of renewal would be appropriate, so it was incorporated into the bill. He offered his opinion that it was unlikely that there would be ad infinitum renewals of rural language teachers who are on the limited teacher certificate, and it was likely one would eventually seek normal certification.

[9:44:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked why certificate renewal would have restrictions and commented it would make sense to keep a teacher involved as long as the teacher is interested and not put any obstacles before him/her.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS replied that Representative Prax's question aligned with his own thinking, but he said he defers to committee process in how best to structure the proposed legislation. He commented that if it is the will of committee to remove that section, which is how the bill was originally drafted, he would be amenable as his broader goal is to pass the proposed legislation. He said he would agree with whatever compromise worked with the appropriate parties.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked for clarification about how to get the limited certificate and offered his understanding that a teacher would have to demonstrate competence in teaching as well as speaking the given language.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS replied that there are multiple layers of review. He said the local school district must first affirmatively approve of the teacher. From there, he explained, the referral goes to DEED, which will write the regulations to provide proper reviews on teaching ability, and only then would a teacher get a certificate for one year.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX commented that he could understand initially limiting the certificate to a year, but if it was successful, he wouldn't want to leave an obstacle in place.

[9:48:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND shared her connection to languages and explained that she spoke Greek as a child. She opined that Alaska Native languages are dying out, and it is important to connect with Native speakers. She commented that she also

wanted to hear about how it was going in the school districts that had been offering Native language immersion for decades.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS suggested that during public testimony there would be many points of perspective from across the state.

[9:50:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY referred to the language on page 2, lines 24-30, of HB 19 and asked if it would be appropriate "for that to be considered for removal and inclusion in the regulatory process."

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON replied he would need time to consider the proposed action but would notify her office. In general, he said, the more specific the legislature is, the easier it is for DEED to implement the proposed legislation as intended. He commented that all of DEED's regulations go through the state board and receive public comment, and so the regulatory process at the department does provide an opportunity to refine legislative intent.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY asked representative Kreiss-Tompkins if it was more advantageous for the language to be stripped or perhaps made broader to allow for a better relationship with the department, which is setting the regulations and standards for certification.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS reiterated that the original version of the bill did not include the language, which he saw as the policy ideal. He commented that preserving maximum latitude for local districts and the state board to manage the teacher certificate program is ideal. He said that if it is necessary that the State Board of Education and Early Development create a cap on how many years a certification can be renewed, he is sure it would do so. He restated that he would defer to the will of the committee.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY responded to Representative Drummond's earlier comments and said that her district has had a Yup'ik immersion program charter school for about 30 years. She shared that many graduates have followed pursuits such as engineering, have gone to Ivy League universities, and have given back to their communities.

[9:54:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK asked Commissioner Johnson what DEED's goal was regarding the proposed legislation.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON replied that more successful students [was the goal]. He shared his belief that education that is integrated with culture, including language, helps students to be more successful. He referred to how [the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium] has helped Alaska through the pandemic and argued that tribes are well equipped and well able to provide for the wellbeing of the community. He said he found this to be an opportunity to have another component of that in education. He asserted that more immersion programs would help at a high level. He also shared that there is evidence that immersion programs result in more students reading proficiently in multiple languages.

[9:57:40 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY announced HB 19 was held over.

[9:58:11 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:58 a.m.