

X.XXX Creating Comprehensive Support for Families and Students to Navigate College and Career Training Opportunities

AASB urges and supports the creation of a comprehensive family and student-centered navigation supports to help all students access college and career training opportunities that will help meet the state's current and future workforce needs.

The Rationale: Alaska's workforce needs are growing, but many recent high school graduates are not pursuing the postsecondary education needed to be prepared to fill job openings and important community roles. Alaska currently has the lowest rate of high school students enrolling in college, the lowest rate of students graduating from college, and the lowest rate of FAFSA* completion of any state in the nation. Meanwhile, Alaska has the highest rate of disconnected youth; young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not engaged in school or the workforce.

Pilot programs in Alaska that provide personal navigation support with dedicated, well-trained, and supported career guides have demonstrated a significant increase in the percentage of high school graduates pursuing some degree, certification, or military training. Participants in these programs also completed the FAFSA at rates that, if applied statewide, could grant Alaskan students access to an additional \$15 million or more in federal aid each year. Furthermore, with culturally relevant family- and student-centered supports, more families will invest themselves in postsecondary saving programs like Alaska 529.

Alaska's best opportunity to meet the workforce needs of tomorrow is to help Alaskan students connect with the postsecondary education they need to be ready.

*Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Submitted by: AASB staff draft