

North Slope Borough

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Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor

NSLT Community Meetings – Education & Workforce Development Summit

This is a summary of the village travel completed by the North Slope Leadership Team (NSLT). During the month of March, the NSLT traveled to the communities of Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Point Lay, Point Hope and Wainwright in order to hold community meetings to discuss the upcoming education and introduce residents to NSLT, to discuss the upcoming summit and to start conversations around the concept of a new regional education center.

- NSLT participation included executive and senior staff from member agencies, mid-level staff that specialize in training and workforce development, as well as participation from member agency board members.
- Meetings occurred according to the following schedule:

Point Lay	3/09
Anaktuvuk Pass	3/11
Atkasuk	3/12
Kaktovik	3/13
Wainwright	3/14
Point Hope	3/15
Nuiqsut	3/30

- Participation in each community averaged roughly 50 participants per community, ranging from 25-75 participants.
- Participation included children, young adults, adults and elders, and represented students, parents, graduates, non-graduates, educators, and residents (both employed and unemployed).
- Generally the feedback was overwhelming supportive.
- Each community asked very thoughtful questions regarding how the center would fit into our current education system and also had even more suggestions as to how it could be structured to best meet the needs of our students, communities and region.

- The large majority of participants seemed to clearly understand how the center could provide increased opportunities to our village students today, resulting in increased opportunities for tomorrow and beyond.

Reoccurring positive themes heard throughout the communities include:

- ***Appreciation/Support for the increased opportunities for village students, with specific reference to a broader and more diverse curriculum, to potentially include advanced courses, vocational education, specialized courses/internships to increase job readiness and immediate employability, acquirement of training through the program. Discussions of potential courses included:***
 - *Carpentry & Welding*
 - *Aviation*
 - *Traditional Arts / Carving / Inupiaq Language*
 - *Advanced Academics: AP Courses, Upper-level Math & Science, Engineering*
 - *Small Engine Repair*
 - *Plumbing*
 - *Housing, Construction and Facility Maintenance*
 - *Eco-Tourism*
 - *ANCSA, ANILCA, Relation to Oil & Gas Activities*
- ***Appreciation/Support for increased opportunities for graduation through intensive short-term courses that allowing students to more quickly earn credits towards a HS Diploma.***
 - *Potential Connection to Kiita Program in Barrow*
 - *Opportunities for course/credit make-up for students who get behind*
 - *Opportunities for summer school; dual credits with Ilisagvik College*
- ***Appreciation/Support for the increased life experiences associated with the temporary placement in a new, larger community, to in turn increase the likelihood of a smooth transition from a village to a city for college or other post-secondary training:***
 - *Exposure to increased infrastructure and size of Barrow*
 - *Opportunity to visit Ilisagvik College; to experience dormitory living*
 - *Opportunity to interactions with increased business, tribal and governmental offices in Barrow, including the opportunity for on the job training and internships.*
 - *Opportunity to experience being away from home for short periods of time, without having to leave the North Slope.*
- ***Identification of different ideas to better utilize current staff and programs/services to improve the success of the proposed center, including:***
 - *Rotation of current teachers to center to allow instruction in their specialty areas,*
 - *Partnerships with existing programs such as ANSEP and RAHI, and also the CareerQuest program with Kuukpik in Nuiqsut*
 - *Making connections to the many researchers present in our communities year round, especially in the summer.*

- *Identification of varying **benefits of different program lengths**, from single-week, multi-week, to semesters, summer sessions, or full academic years.*
 - *Allows our region the opportunity to find what fits our needs*
 - *Allows students the opportunity to remain in home communities during hunting, whaling, sports, and other activities.*
 - *Allows some students the opportunity to have access to a stable and consistent environment during the academic year, when circumstances at home are unfavorable.*
 - *Possibility of rotating larger groups of students and teachers into the program, following a schedule that allows all communities to rotate in/out at different times.*

There were also very thoughtful questions and concerns repeated from multiply communities, however, they were quickly alleviated after further explanation from the NSLT and presenter. This included clarification that:

- ***FUNDING: Pupil funding to the district is not reduced** by participation in this program, as it would if students attended a similar program in another district.*
 - ***Funding will not leave our school district.***
- ***FUNDING: Increase opportunities for additional residential funding from State of Alaska** could be available in order to support costs associated with round-trip travel and associated program costs.*
 - *The proposed legislation currently has strong and promising support throughout the State.*
- ***FEASIBILITY/ACCESS: While we would like to allow the opportunities made available through this program to exist independently within each village school site**, current and future economic conditions will not allow this to occur—just as in other districts.*
 - *The current proposal is a cost-effective approach to address educational discrepancies.*
 - *It is economically impossible to duplicate these same opportunities on an individual level within every school site within our region.*
- ***FEASIBILITY/ACCESS: School districts have unsuccessfully attempted programs that rotate educators throughout the villages**, rather than allowing students to travel.*
 - *These programs proved to be unsustainable and eventually failed, largely due to teacher burnout.*
- ***FEASIBILITY/LOCATION: Locating the new school in a village?** Locating the center in Barrow allows access to a comprehensive high school, as well as to already existing infrastructure and opportunities for program partnerships with the employers from the public, private and non-profit sectors.*