

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 22, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

We are writing in support of the request for reconsideration submitted to you by the Anchorage School District in regard to the non-continuation of the district's Fostering Diverse Schools Demonstration Program grant. While we agree with you that School Based Mental Health funding is desperately needed, Anchorage School District has used their Fostering Diverse Schools grant funds to help all high school students prepare for high-paying, high-demand jobs. This, too, is a high priority.

Executive Order 14153, *Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential*, represents a key priority for the President and underscores the administration's commitment to strengthening both the state and national economy. To fully realize the opportunities created by this initiative, investing in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in high schools is essential. These programs equip students with the technical skills and industry knowledge required to enter the workforce and support Alaska's growing energy and resource sectors, ensuring a pipeline of qualified professionals ready to advance the state's economic development and energy security objectives.

Anchorage School District has used the Fostering Diverse Schools grant funds extremely effectively to expand access to CTE opportunities to all high school students and to expand the number of CTE opportunities to include additional high-demand jobs. In the two years funded by the grant, 3,758 students have enrolled in CTE Pathways and earned 12,402 credentials. Ninth grade students showed a significant 4.57 percent increase in their on-track to graduate status. Of those students who choose to concentrate on a CTE Pathway, 98 percent graduate on time, compared to 82 percent for all other students. Eighty percent of the concentrators enroll in postsecondary training or enter jobs with sustainable wages compared to 42 percent of ASD graduates overall. These are the kinds of positive outcomes that taxpayers and policymakers are looking for as we invest in our schools.

The negative impacts of cancelling these grant funds would be significant.

- 10 of 25 CTE Pathways will be scaled back or eliminated, including emerging programs in natural resources and environmental management, healthcare, business, education, and engineering.
- 750 students annually will lose direct access to CTE courses due to the elimination of 6 CTE teaching positions.
- 10,301 high school students will face reduced opportunities for career exploration, career readiness, work-based learning, and business engagement due to the elimination of 8 Academy Coaches.

- Work-based learning opportunities that offer real world career experiences such as job shadowing, internships, and mentorships, will be reduced significantly.
- Freshman transition supports will be scaled back or eliminated, which will weaken students' transition to high school.
- The Family Ambassadors programs at each high school will end, reducing parental connection to student career and college planning.

Preparing our nation's young people for good jobs in high-demand fields is a high priority for President Trump, for you, and for us. We strongly urge you to reconsider your decision to cancel Anchorage School District's Fostering Diverse Schools grant funding. We look forward to your timely response.

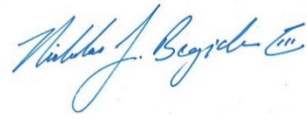
Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Nicholas Begich
Congressman for All Alaska