

**STATEMENT OF POSITION**

The Alaska State League of Women Voters believes that the combination of home and school prepares students for competence in the world of work. The League recognizes the importance of parental advocacy and/or adult mentor-ship in the career preparation process. The majority of people receive no schooling or training, other than on the job, beyond high school. Therefore, we believe that our schools have the responsibility to graduate students who exhibit job readiness, positive work attitudes, and cooperation skills that will enable them to find and hold employment.

The League believes that the Alaskan schools should offer equal opportunities and respect to ALL students: those who will have post-secondary schooling and those who will immediately go into the work force. To meet this goal, the basic curricula should include problem-solving skills, interpersonal communications and tolerance skills, as well as provide opportunities to explore careers and offer courses containing specific technical training and career experience. Academic skills needed for success in today's entry-level careers should be integrated into career preparation experience.

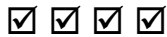
**AMPLIFICATION**

In order to strengthen career education programs, the League makes the following recommendations:

- A career development specialist should be designated within each Alaskan school district administration to coordinate career education, vocational/technical programs, and outreach work in the community.
- Occupational training classes should be introduced in the middle/junior high schools, so that all students entering ninth grade will already have met certain prerequisites. (For example, basic computer literacy should be demonstrated.)
- All high schools should offer well-defined programs and courses that provide the opportunity to explore careers, rather than achieve mastery. (Programs that provide entry-level skills should be available in the community for those students who desire specific occupational training.)
- The League recognizes that purchasing and maintaining equipment that will provide state-of-the-art technical training is expensive. However, in order to meet the needs of all students, we find this a reasonable cost of providing a complete education.
- Adequate funding must be secured to provide relevant, well-defined career preparation programs.
- Efforts should be made to change the image of vocational education.
  - "Career Preparation or Education" or "Occupational Education" or "Job Readiness" or "Technical Preparation" are suggestions for replacing the term "Vocational Education."
  - State exposure to technical training and/or community service at an earlier age.
  - Raise the academic standards of vocational/technical classes and allow cross-crediting (which allows a career preparation class or job-partnership experience to be credited in place of another academic requirement.)

(Continued)

- Career Counseling efforts should be expanded.
  - ALL middle/junior-high and high school students should have access to career counseling.
  - Encourage the use of adult and high school volunteers for class scheduling and counseling assistance. Also, utilize computers and other relevant tools to decrease administrative and scheduling workloads, so that counselors can concentrate more on career counseling.
  - At least one individual at each high school should be designated a "career counselor."
  - Career preference and/or aptitude tests should be available at each student's option, as long as results are not used to "track" or otherwise direct student away from any avenue of interest to him/her. Career exploration experiences are not a fixed or lock-in path, and any one job experience can – and often does – lead to additional interests.



**Adopted 1994; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.**