

Teacher Certification

Processes, Partnerships, and Progress

Colleen Walker, Teacher Education and Certification Administrator
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development



Today's Topics

- Historical context of teacher certification in Alaska
- Digital transformation: TEACH-AK launch
- District support: District Communication Hub
- Teacher Certification Team
- Key highlights and metrics
- Alaska Reads Act & endorsement data
- Looking Forward



Teacher Certification

Statehood



- Certification authority transferred to the Alaska Department of Education.
- Formal certificate types established

1912

Territorial Era

- Certification overseen by the U.S. Office of Education.
- Basic requirements: moral character and instructional ability.

1959



1980s - 1990s



Regulatory Updates

- Required coursework added (e.g., Alaska Studies, Multicultural Education).
- Standardized tests (e.g., Praxis) introduced.
- Certificate renewal and continuing professional development requirements implemented.

Partial Digitization

- Online renewals available online via a basic webform/email process.
- Other application types still required paper submission.

2010



2023



TEACH-AK & District Communication Hub

- TEACH-AK is an online certification and application system. Applicants can submit applications, upload documents, track status, and communicate online.
- The District Communication Hub provides real-time access to applications and certificates of the educators employed by the district.

Enhancements and Support

- Feedback drives system enhancements.
- Professional learning provided for applicants, districts, and certification analysts to ensure clarity and consistency.

2025



Digital Transformation

The Educator Application & Certification Hub Alaska (TEACH-AK)

- 2023- Soft launch of TEACH-AK (Renewals only)
- 2024 - Full Launch (all applications)
- Streamlined application processing
 - Automatic emails
 - Review and update of back office systems
 - Updated review process to improve efficiency/processing times



10,148 TEACH-AK applicant accounts created

5,088 applications processed

Processing time reduced:
16 weeks → 4 weeks

(as of May 2025)

The District Communication Hub (DCH)

- Launched in Fall 2024
- Secure portal for district HR staff
- Enables real-time certification status checks of district employees
- Districts can view documents that were submitted by applicants and correspondence sent to the applicant
- Access to information in the DCH provides districts with the information needed to provide additional support and feedback to new hires



135 District Communication
Hub accounts have been
created

45 districts represented

(as of May 2025)

New Systems



Over 15 new internal certification processes to support our customers

- Application workflow in TEACH-AK
- Correspondence with applicants
- Financial process
- Professional Teaching Practices Commission processes
- Streamlined second review process
- Collaboration with Retirement and Benefits
- Customer support offered via video conference
- Using SMART goals to focus the team's time efficiently and drive continuous process improvement

and more...

Teacher Certification Team

- Review and process applications
- Communicate with applicants and districts
- Monitor regulatory compliance
- Educate users on certification pathways
- Support adding endorsements (e.g., AK Reads Act)
- Provide excellent customer service



**TEACHER
EDUCATION AND
CERTIFICATION**

 tcwebmail@alaska.gov

 907-465-2831

Colleen Walker
Teacher Education & Certification
Administrator

Joia Sangster
Teacher Certification Analyst
Online Renewal Lead

Jennifer Neal
Teacher Certification Analyst
TEACH-AK Lead

Nicole Thompson
Program Coordinator
Teacher Registered Apprenticeship

Stephine Bishop
Teacher Certification Lead Analyst
DHS & PTPG Liaison

Tris Caputo
Teacher Certification Analyst

Teacher Certification Data

- 12 available teacher certificates
 - 6 Regular Teacher Certificates
 - 6 District Sponsored Teacher Certificates
- 12,421 active teacher certificates
- 6,858 teaching positions

June 1, 2024 – June 1, 2025

- 5,088 applications processed
- 2,191 certificates renewed
- 2,834 AK Reads Act endorsements added
- Reduced the 16 week processing time to 4 weeks

Alaska Reads Act Endorsements

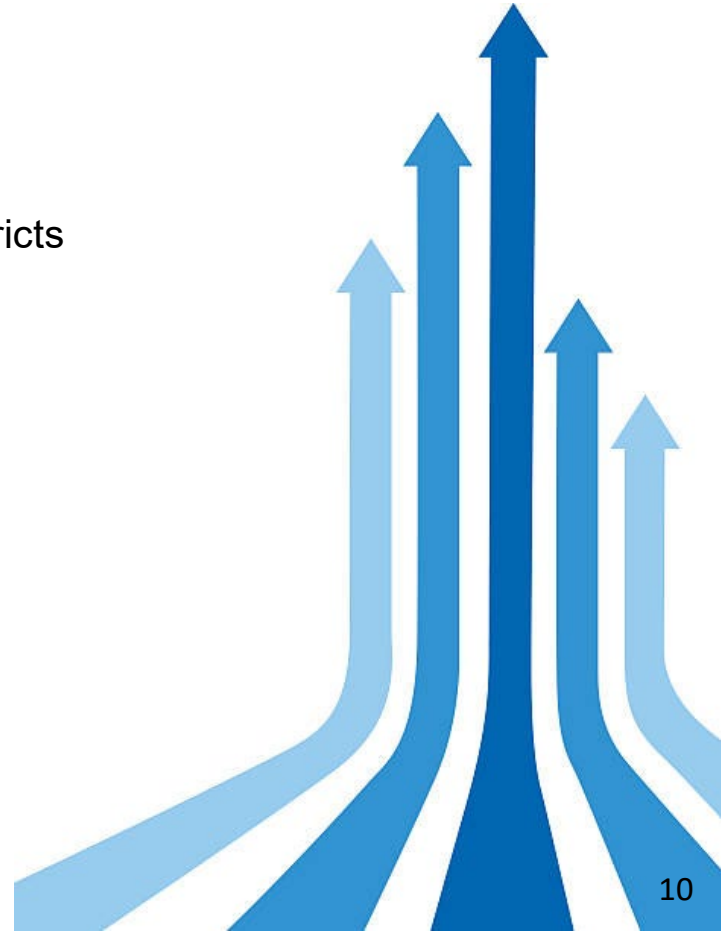
Endorsement Type	Count
AK Reads Act K–3 Teacher	2,413
AK Reads Act K–3 Administrator	391
AK Reads Act Reading Teacher	89
AK Reads Act Early Ed Lead	39
Total	2,932
Active	2,788
Pending Renewal/Extension	144

Active & Pending Endorsements (as of June 1, 2025)



Looking Forward

- Continued improvements in system automation
- Expanded training and support for applicants and districts
- Monitoring policy impact (e.g., Reads Act)
- Renewal credit support
 - University Credit
 - Continuing Education Units
 - Non-Academic Credit
 - Mico-credentials
- Strengthening interdepartmental collaboration



Contact Information

Colleen Walker,
Administrator
Teacher Education &
Certification

(907) 269-3615
colleen.walker@alaska.gov

Teacher Certification Helpdesk
tcwebmail@alaska.gov
(907) 465-2831

Questions?

