



MEMORANDUM

To: State Board of Education & Early Development
Date: May 18, 2021

Thru: Commissioner Michael Johnson
Telephone: (907) 465-2857

From: Director Tamara Van Wyhe
Subject: Division Updates

Assessments

Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS)

- The spring 2021 PEAKS administration concluded on May 14, 2021.
 - March 29 – May 14, 2021: Computer-Based Assessment Window
 - April 5 – April 23, 2021: Paper-Based Assessment Window
 - 53 of 54 school districts successfully tested in some capacity
 - 42,655 students across Alaska completed testing (ELA, Math, and science if applicable)
 - Caveat: This number will increase due to 1) Kuspuk, LKSD, ASD still testing makeups as of Thursday morning. 2) This does not include number of students who didn't properly submitted their test and therefore it is left as 'in progress' until DRC 'force submits those at close of test window.
 - Districts completed testing by the following test modes:
 - Computer-Based – 43 districts
 - Paper-Based – 7 districts
 - Both Computer-Based and Paper-Based – 3 districts

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment

- The 2021 DLM Alternate Assessment window close on May 7, 2021.
- 713 test sessions were completed in ELA, Math, and Science.
- Approximately 58% of rostered youth completed the DLM assessment during the testing window.

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs

- The WIDA ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS test window was closed on March 31, 2021.
- During the Data Validation process, there were approximately 5,900 students included in the test files. (Note: this number is an approximate indicator of how many students took ACCESS, it may include students who only partially completed the assessment.)
- Assessment results will be available electronically on May 26th.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

- Alaska participated in *the NAEP 2021 School and Teacher Questionnaire Special Study*, which was administered to sampled schools between March 29-April 30, 2021. Most of the sampled schools completed both questionnaires, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) plans to release a special report based on findings from the study. Data is expected to be available to states through the NAEP Data Explorer.
- The National Assessment Governing Board recently updated the NAEP assessment schedule to reflect the congressional waiver that postponed the 2021 NAEP administration to 2022. NAEP 2022 and NAEP Long Term Trend Age 17 notifications will be sent to districts and schools in fall 2021.
- This spring NAEP released multiple reports, which are available on the National Assessment Governing Board website <https://www.nagb.gov/>:
 - The National Indian Education Study (NIES) 2019 Report was released on May 18th.
 - The National Assessment of Education Progress Science results was released on May 25th – note the 2019 Science assessment was a national sample and there are no state level results.
 - NAEP 2019 State Mapping Study was released on June 1st.
 - On April 27th, the National Center for Education Statistics released *The NAEP 2018 Oral Reading Fluency Study: The 2018 NAEP Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) study* is conducted by NCES to examine fourth-grade students' ability to read passages out loud with sufficient speed, accuracy, and expression, as well as foundational skills to gauge underlying sources of poor fluency. Oral reading fluency and foundational skills are important components of reading that are necessary for successful reading comprehension. A nationally representative sample of about 1,800 fourth graders from 180 public schools participated in the ORF study.
 - The Institute of Education Sciences launched the *Monthly School Survey Dashboard* on Wednesday, March 24th. The survey collected data five times, once a month from February through June of 2021. The dashboard will be updated again in July, **Alaska did not participate in this study**, however the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on learning opportunities nationally may be valuable for comparison. More information about the Monthly School Survey can be found at <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/>.

Career and Technical Education program

- The DEED leadership and CTE team participated in presentations to legislative committees during the current legislative session. These joint presentations addressed CTE and workforce development with staff from the University of Alaska, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, district CTE program leaders, and postsecondary training partners. Emphasis was placed on partnerships beyond the classroom that provide students value beyond graduation.
- The CTE team is working with four school districts to wrap up FY2021 required monitoring of federally funded Perkins programs. Forty school districts have received federal Perkins funds this year.
- The school district application for FY22 Carl Perkins funds is open and available to all districts.

COVID-19 Relief

- The American Rescue Plan Act, 2021 (ARP), was signed into law on March 11, 2021. The ARP Act provides an additional \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III Fund) to help meet a wide range of needs arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, including reopening schools safely, sustaining their safe operation, and addressing students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs resulting from the pandemic. The State of Alaska's ESSER III Fund allocation is \$358 million. These funds are in addition to the \$159.7 million the State of Alaska received under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act and the \$38.4 million the State of Alaska received under the CARES Act.
- The ARP Act provides an additional \$2.75 billion in assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS), \$3 billion for Special Education, and additional funding for homeless children & youth, Tribal Educational Agencies, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives. Under the EANS program, the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) was awarded funds to provide services or assistance to eligible non-public schools to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on non-public school students and teachers in the State. DEED is currently working with non-public schools around the state to provide reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenses and set up services to support the needs of children arising from the Coronavirus pandemic.
- DEED continues to create and update resources related to the all COVID-19 relief funding sources. All resources are posted to the DEED COVID-19 Relief website at <https://education.alaska.gov/safeschools/infectiousdisease#covidrelief>.
- DEED continues to engage with stakeholders and create resources to assist districts in the creation of their District Plans. All resources are posted to the DEED ARP State Plan website at <https://education.alaska.gov/safeschools/infectiousdisease/arp-state-plan>.
- American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021- State Plan for the ARP ESSER Act ([ARP State Plan Web Page](#)) Note:5 at the time of submission of this report, the State Plan is not completed.
 - Plan Development
 - State Plan Template available April 21, 2021
 - Completed State Plan due to US ED by June 7, 2021
 - A team has been organized to plan and work on the 7 sections of the plan.
 - Identifying the needs
 - Stakeholder input at both the state and district level

- Support and oversight DEED will provide to districts
- How the state plans to spend
 - 5% of funds on the Academic Impact of lost instructional time (\$17.9 million)
 - 1% of funds on Evidence-Based Summer Learning and Enrichment Programs (\$3.58 million)
 - 1% of funds on Evidence-Based Comprehensive After-School Programs (\$3.58 million)
- Supporting the Educator Workforce
- Collecting data on mode of instruction, evidence-base interventions utilized by districts, fiscal data, etc.
- Stakeholder Engagement
 - Data collection Tool: ThoughtExchange
 - Hosted webinars to provide information regarding ARP Act and the State Plan
 - Plan Updates
 - May 7, 2021, 2:00 pm
 - May 14, 2021, 2:00pm
 - May 21, 2021, 2:00 pm
 - Updates for Superintendents only
 - May 21, 2021, 10:00 am
 - Stakeholder engagement opportunities
 - May 10, 2021, 6PM
 - May 11, 2021, 6PM
 - May 12, 2021, 6PM
 - May 18, 2021, 12pm
 - May 19, 2021, 12pm

Data and Accountability

- Accountability System
 - The US Department of Education (US ED) released an addendum for accountability for the system that will be calculated in Fall 2021. This addendum provides for some flexibility around: indicators in which we have missing data from 2019-2020, long-term goals (bumping them one year forward), and around school identification and continued school support. DEED prepared a plan, shared this plan with stakeholders in December, and finalized this plan in late January. The addendum (and a corresponding waiver for the identification of TSI schools in Fall 2021) was submitted to US ED in early February.
 - Three weeks after the initial due date for the addendum template, a waiver template for accountability and reporting was released by US ED. At the end of March, webinars were held with internal and external stakeholders to describe the waiver template and answer any questions. During the month of April, stakeholder feedback was gathered on the waiver template. The stakeholder feedback survey closed on April 30th. Responses were consistent and demonstrated support for applying for a waiver using the waiver template released at the end of February.

- Data Collections
 - The Suspensions and Expulsions collection opened for submissions on 5/15/2021 and is set to close on 06/30/2021.
 - The Participation Rate collection closed submissions on 04/19/2021.
 - The Summer OASIS collection is set to open on 06/01/2021 and close on 07/15/2021.
 - Additional data collections related to the American Rescue Plan State Plan template and Pandemic-EBT were launched in the month of May.
- ED Facts – Federal Reporting Requirements
 - The February ED Facts and CSRP Part I and Part II data collections have been completed.
 - Additional rounds of ED Facts submissions and data quality review were completed in March-June.

Early Learning Program

Pre-Elementary

- Seventeen school districts continue to receive PreK grant funds. Individual communities continue to make service delivery decisions using the Smart Start guidance.
- The annual PreK grantee meeting was held on February 26 via Zoom. Grantees discussed the flow of pre-elementary services so far this year, shared plans for the remaining months of school, and discussed options for extended school year/summer services.
- Congress appropriated CRSSA and ARPA funding for Head Start. This funding will go directly to Head Start grantees from the federal Office of Head Start using a formula based upon funded enrollment.
- The Office of Head Start completed their pilot of the “[Head Start- Public School Collaboration Demonstration Project](#).” This project included teams from 11 states (including Alaska) where public schools and head start partners worked together to improve transitions to Kindergarten for children and families.
- Dr. Bernadine Futrell is the new Director of the Office of Head Start. She had previously led superintendent certification programs at the American Association of School Administrators.

ESEA/ESSA Federal Programs

- The ESEA Federal Programs team hosted its annual ESEA Consolidated Application Technical Assistance Workshop virtually April 19-22, 2021. This workshop provided guidance and technical assistance to districts in complying with the provisions under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). DEED staff provides programmatic and Grant Management System (GMS) application updates.
- The State Board met on April 21, 2021 to review the proposed changes to the English learner regulations regarding the WIDA Standards and Exit Criteria. The proposed changes are currently out for a period of public comment. Additionally, language and definitions are being reviewed to address specific member comments.
- The Migrant Education Program completed its annual migratory child count reporting for the U.S. Department of Education. In 2019-20, Alaska had 12,949 migratory children (birth to 20, but not graduated) statewide. The number of migratory children decreased by 395 from 2018-19 to 2019-20.

- DEED’s 2020 21st CCLC Statewide Evaluation was cited in a March 2021 national [Research Brief](#) titled “The academic and social and emotional benefits of participation in 21st Century Community Learning Centers.”
- One of DEED’s 21st CCLC grantee’s programs—the Lathrop After the Bell program of FNSBSD was featured in an [Afterschool Spotlight](#) that is shared nationally.

Health and Safety Programs

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Preparedness

- DEED’s new COVID 19 Response and Recovery Mental Health Education Specialist II Position has had a productive first three months on the Health and Safety Team. The team has met with district school boards, school leadership, staff, and community-based mental health providers and has onboarded 8 rural and remote school districts that do not otherwise have in-school access to mental health supports. The team has delivered presentations introducing the *Transforming Schools Framework* and other mental health enhancing in-service trainings this spring. Additionally, through this new position, rural and remote districts have received live social-emotional learning lessons directly via zoom to elementary students and high schoolers across the state and direct, one on one services to staff and students are available and being utilized. The team is currently working with districts to plan for Fall 2021 as a means of is expanding its pandemic mental health response efforts.
- DEED, in partnership with DHSS, has continued to deliver School Health ECHO trainings to districts every Monday at 3pm. These popular statewide virtual trainings provide weekly updates on COVID 19 mitigation strategies and allow districts to both seek clarification on COVID related issues and to share successes and challenges.

School Health and Safety Events

- The Health and Safety Teams, *Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma Engaged and Practice in Alaska* has been listed as a case study (1 of 5) and potential promising practice for “Improving education outcome for students who have experienced trauma and or adversity” in a paper written by the American Institutes for Research for OECD iLibrary. The paper can be found here [54d45980-en.pdf \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#) (Listed on pages 52-53) Currently DEED staff has send out 8,500 copies of the Transforming Schools Framework to Alaskans.

Quality Schools Program

- Reviewed Quality Schools Grant applications detailing each school district’s plans to improve student achievement through the use of state standards.
- Assisted districts with End of the Year reports for the 2020-2021 school year. This report demonstrates how their funded activities contributed to student academic achievement.

School Disciplinary Reports

- Hosted two statewide webinars to discuss the 2020-2021 suspension and expulsion data handbook and submission process.

eLearning

- Released the eLearning course *Overcoming Stress and Anxiety in Alaskan Schools*. The course explains how stress and anxiety impact students and staff in Alaskan schools and provides practical tools. This course was created in partnership with the Division of Public Health.
- Solidified our next 5-year contract to continue the eLearning program without any interruption in service.

School Recognition and Support

- **Staffing**
 - Math / Science Content Specialist, Joy Abbott, starts June 4, 2021
- **Grant funding News**
 - **CLSD** – Comprehensive Literacy Statewide Development Grant
 - CLSD Grant Specialist making last of the monthly calls for Year 2
 - 30 district grant project team members attended calls each month
 - April 1st Convening facilitated virtually on zoom
 - 45 participants from 18 districts representing teams from all 16 subgrantees in attendance
 - Included: updates, Year 2 reflection, and guided discussion for district leaders time to reflect, plan, and network
 - Basic reading supports and research provided for district in need
 - CLSD Specific Website up and running
 - CLSD Specific Newsletter published 2nd Wednesday every month to provide updates, resources, and highlight a great project in the grant
 - Project Workbooks submitted by each subgrantee on May 1st for Year 2
 - Tracked: district specific project goals, timeline milestones, planning for improvement, and professional development
- **School Improvement**
 - **CSI TSI** – Comprehensive Support and Intervention and Targeted Support and Intervention
 - FY21 Grant
 - Review and approve revisions in GMS
 - School Improvement Redesign
 - Work with team at DEED, R16CC, and consultants to continue the redesign process.
 - Determined FY22 process and documents will remain the same to allow for partnership and more time for training school and district leadership teams for FY23 and forward.
 - Continued work on CSI TSI website
 - CSI TSI monthly newsletters highlighting 4 Domains, Q&A section for frequently asked questions, reminders for upcoming deadlines, and spotlighting a site or district for their work in school improvement
- **SSOS**
 - RFP
 - Round 1 resulted in two current coaches extended contracts

- Round 2 preparing to go back through the RFP process to solicit for more contractors to support lowest 5% schools
- Regional meetings and biweekly DEED and SSOS coach meetings will continue through May.
- SSOS coaches focusing in on collected data to support new needs assessment and to support school improvement planning and goals for FY22 (due June 30, 2021)
- 2001 hours of combined hours of coaching service provided to CSI lowest 5 % schools August through April 2021
- **Standards Training**
 - ELA Content Specialist
 - WIDA ELD 2020 Standards framework
 - Social studies standards adoption process
 - Research (other state processes and local curriculum/standards adoption process), canvas course creation, timeline creation and ongoing evaluation
- **Professional Development / Resources**
 - CLSD ongoing support with monthly calls and training
 - Teacher Gazette Newsletter published 3rd Wednesday of every month to provide literacy strategies, family connection components, educational technology, and health and wellness tips and tricks.
 - Support requested for New Teacher Mentorship program in Matsu district for next year
 - SRS Team are researching opportunities to provide training for new teachers in the coming year
 - working with Comprehensive Center to develop training for CSI TSI Districts
 - Collaboration with UAF on teacher-developed coding projects
- **Relationship Building**
 - Connections are happening across the state
 - Convenings, Echo, Book Studies, monthly calls, and a service-driven experience is creating opportunities to reach teachers all across the state
- **Recognition**
 - Teacher of the Year
 - Five rounds completed
 - Top 5 Educators shared out on May 3, 2021
 - AK Alternate Teacher of The Year selected and presented to Kevin Neyhard Zoom on 5.4.2021
 - AK Teacher of the Year selected and presented award to Kelly Shrein in person on 5.5.2021
 - Kelly Shrein will represent Alaska in the National Teacher of the Year 2022
 - Milken
 - No Alaska Selection this year

Special Education Program

- Compliance/ Special Education Monitoring –
- The FY20 compliance monitoring complete, and the compliance monitoring corrective actions are complete.
- The FY21 compliance monitoring is still ongoing via desk auditing of files.

- The FY21 technical assistance support schedule is pending the completion of the compliance monitoring and will be conducted virtually.
- Weekly special education webinar continues for special education professionals. The focus is COVID-19 issues, but other special education updates and a Q&A session is included. The department will continue these webinars indefinitely.
- Autism Speaks, a national organization has contacted the department to consider making 14 the age to require secondary transition plans in the Individual Education Program (IEP to start. Alaska current does not restrict any age but follows the federal requirement of mandatory by age 16 (34 CFR 300.320).
- The state maintains support of district use of PowerSchool–Special Education in accordance with state requirements.
- The department submitted the Annual Performance Report and State Performance Plan (APR/SPP) to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) as well as the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). These materials were reviewed by stake holder groups, including the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP).
- The annual federal grant application for special education has been submitted to the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- All federally required data that is posted on the state special education website is current and ADA compliant.
- Complaint and Due Process Hearing information remains available to the public (not posted online Re: 34 CFR 300.513 (d))
- The Due Process and Administrative Complaints data for the current reporting period is follows:
 - Due process Hearings: 1 in progress
 - Complaint Investigations: 6 completed, 2 in progress

Teacher Certification Information

Emergency Certificates

For most of the 2020-2021 school year, the Teacher Certification Office has been able to issue emergency certificates. As part of the Declaration of Public Health Disaster Emergency, the Governor suspended statutory and regulatory requirements that were barriers for educators to gain or maintain Alaska certification and allowed for districts to focus on the continuation of educational services to their students. The suspension of requirements applied to any applicant for Alaska certification and all certificated staff members of Alaska School Districts. Commissioner Johnson invoked his authority under AS 14.20.020 and 4 AAC 12.410 to issue emergency certification and waive requirements for the renewal of certification in light to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the emergency, the following certification requirements could be waived:

- Basic competency examination
- Content area examination
- Alaska studies coursework
- Alaska multicultural coursework
- Notarization
- Minimum required hours for student teaching

All emergency certificates required the support of an Alaska public school district. The emergency certificates were only valid until the end of the school year. The districts using the emergency certificate and the endorsement areas issued on emergency certificates during the 2020-2021 school year are provided below.

Emergency Certificates Issued by District, SY 20-21

District	Emergency Certificates	District	Emergency Certificates
Alaska Gateway School District	4	Klawock City School District	1
Aleutians East Schools	3	Kodiak Island Schools	16
Anchorage School District	50	Kuspuk Schools	9
Annette Island Schools	5	Lake & Peninsula Schools	8
Bering Strait School District	29	Lower Kuskokwim Schools	38
Bristol Bay Borough Schools	1	Lower Yukon Schools	20
Chatham Schools	2	Mat-Su Schools	35
Chugach School District	1	Nenana City Schools	1
Copper River Schools	4	Nome City Schools	1
Delta/Greely School District	3	North Slope Borough Schools	12
Dillingham School District	5	NW Arctic Borough Schools	16
Fairbanks Northstar Borough SD	9	Petersburg City Schools	5
Galena City School District	13	Sitka School District	2
Haines Borough School District	1	St Mary's School District	1
Hoonah City Schools	4	SW Region School District	8
Hydaburg City School District	1	Valdez City Schools	2
Iditarod Area Schools	1	Wrangell City Schools	1
Juneau Borough Schools	5	Yakutat City Schools	1
Kake City Schools	1	Yukon Flats Schools	5
Kashunamiut Schools	3	Yukon/Koyukuk Schools	12
Kenai Peninsula School District	9	Yupiiit School District	3
Ketchikan Gateway Schools	4	Total Emergency Certificates	355

Source: Teacher Certification Database, May 13, 2021

Emergency Certificate Endorsements, SY 20-21

Endorsements	#	Endorsements	#	Endorsements	#
Agriculture	3	Language Arts	8	Administration	4
Art	3	Library	1	Counseling Psychology	1
Bilingual Education	1	Marketing	1	Counselor	2
Biology	4	Mathematics	28	Guidance and Counseling	4
Business	1	Multiple Subjects	2	Occupational Therapy	2
Business Education	2	Music	6	Principal	4
Career & Technical	1	Music - Instrumental	1	School Counselor	21
Chinese	1	Physical Education	7	School Nurse	1
Construction	1	Physical Science	1	School Psychologist	1

Endorsements	#	Endorsements	#	Endorsements	#
Early Childhood Education	13	Physics	2	School Social Work	5
Earth/Space Science	1	Political Science	1	Speech/Language Pathologist	2
Economics	1	Psychology	1		
Elementary Education	134	Reading	10		
English	27	Reading Specialist	2		
English as a Second Language	15	Science	13		
English Immersion	2	Secondary Education	1		
English/Language Arts	7	Social Sciences	7		
General Science	4	Social Studies	26		
Generalist	1	Spanish	3		
Geography	5	Special Education	59		
Government	3	Speech	1		
Health	2	Technology Education	1		
History	8	Theatre Arts	3		
Industrial Technology	1	US History	1		
Journalism	1	Visual Arts	2		
		World History	1		

Source: Teacher Certification Database, May 13, 2021

Moving forward, educators holding emergency certificates issued during the COVID-19 emergency will need to satisfy the missing requirements and gain standard certificates as described in statutes and regulations. The Teacher Certification Office is working closely with districts to support applicants as they transition from emergency certification to standard certification.

Emergency Name-based Background Check

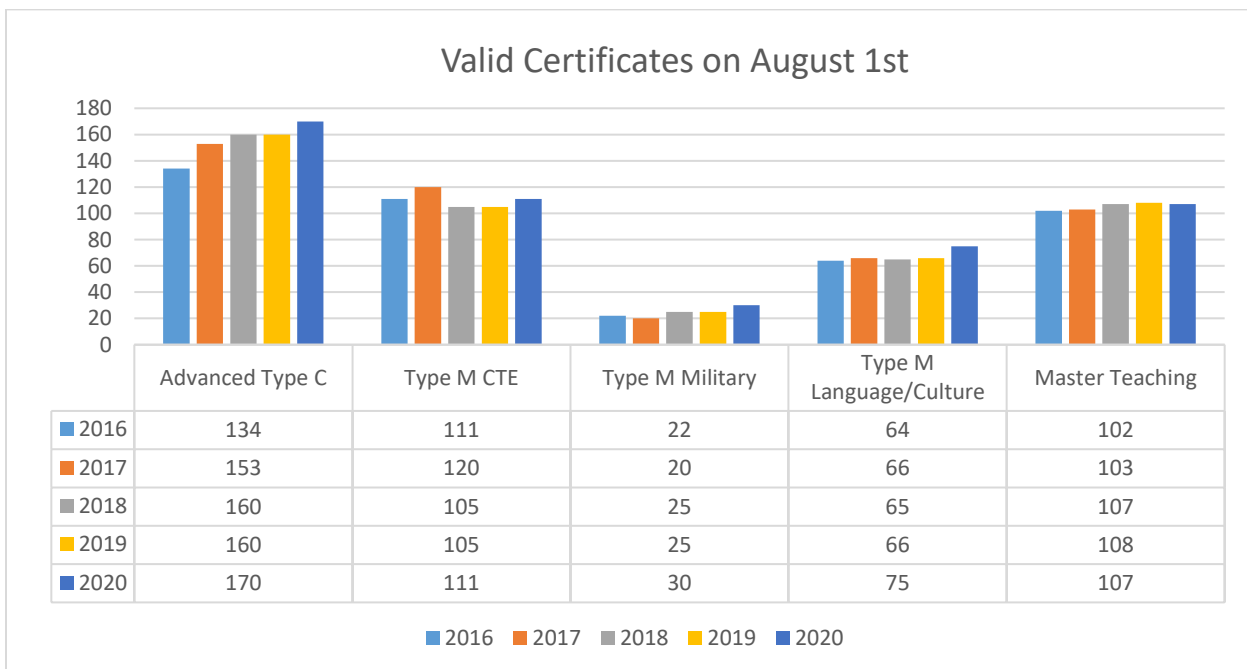
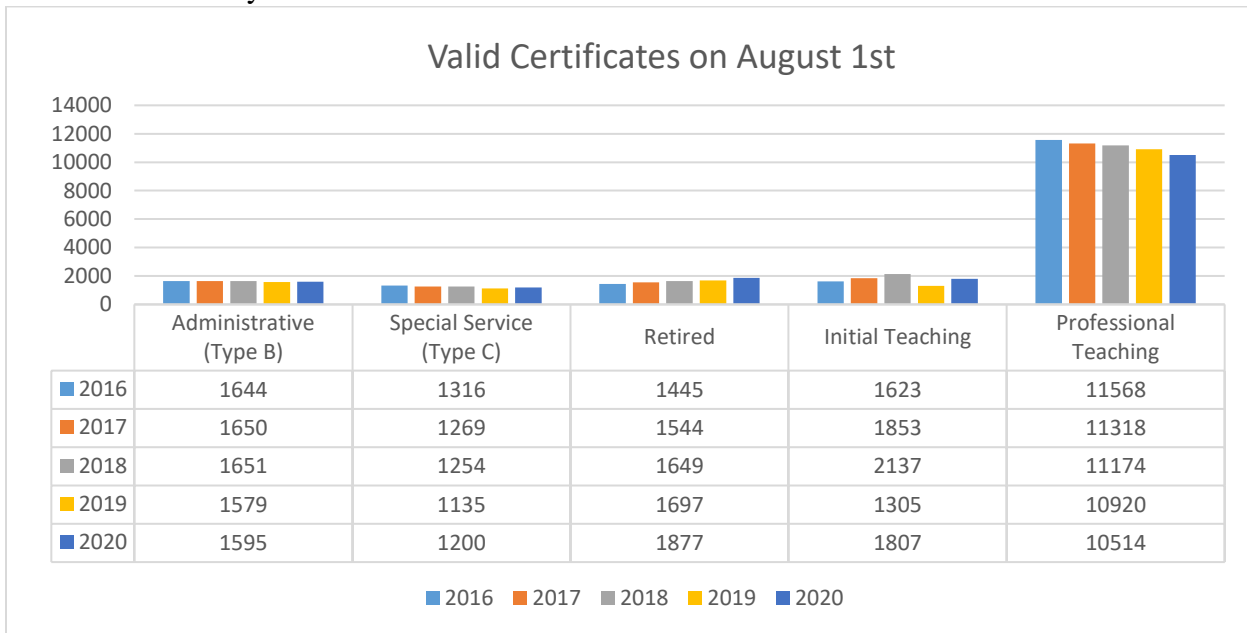
During the COVID-19 emergency, the emergency name-based criminal history check allowed the department to process applications while giving the applicants additional time to find a trained technician to roll their fingerprints. With the expiration of the governor's disaster declaration on February 22nd, the teacher certification team has been working with these applicants who are required to submit a fingerprint card to the Department of Public Safety within the 90-day of the expiration of the disaster declaration. Moving forward, this option will not be available.

Certificate Numbers

The number of active certificates in Alaska valid on August 1st for the past five years are displayed in the following two charts. During this time frame, the data reveal:

- The number of individuals holding Retired Certificates has increased by 23%;
- The number of individuals holding Initial Teaching Certificates dipped significantly in 2019, but rebounded in 2020;

- The number of individuals holding Professional Teaching Certificates have decreased by 9%; and
- The number of individuals holding an Advanced Type C Special Service Certificates has increased by 27%.



Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Accreditation Visits

The University of Alaska Anchorage’s Advanced Programs had their accreditation site visit in March. In May, the University of Alaska Fairbank’s Advanced Programs had their accreditation site visit. Both

were held virtually through Zoom, and both were attended by the Teacher Certification Administrator. The CAEP Accreditation Council will meet in October to make the final determination on UAA and UAF's Advanced Programs' accreditation status.

The Alaska Pacific University is scheduled for the review of its initial teacher preparation program in the Fall of 2022.