

Alaska Reads Act Evaluation Report: Year 1

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

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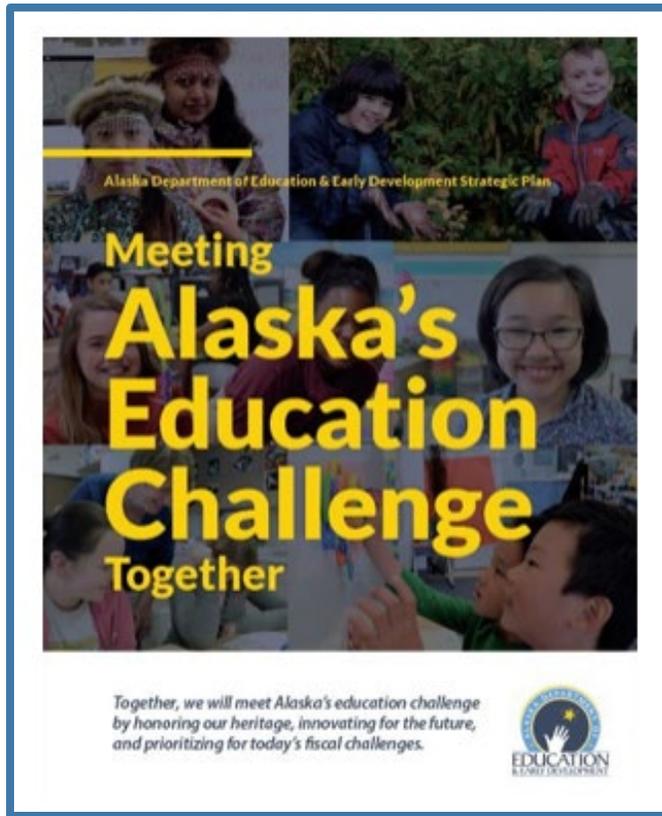
June 4, 2025



Mission, Vision, and Purpose

Mission	Vision	Purpose
<p>An excellent education for every student every day.</p>	<p>All students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.</p> <p>- Alaska Statute 14.03.015</p>	<p>DEED exists to provide information, resources, and leadership to support an excellent education for every student every day.</p>

Alaska's Education Challenge



Five Shared Strategic Priorities:

1. Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
2. Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
3. Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.
4. Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.
5. Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.



Alaska Reads Act

Year 1 Evaluation Findings



Prepared and Presented By: Pacific Research and Evaluation, LLC

- DEED began partnership with Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE) in September 2024 to conduct third-party evaluation of AK Reads Act
- Year one study includes results from:
 - Student literacy outcome data from 2023-24 school year - used as baseline
 - Results from DEED District Reading Survey (n=38) - administered by DEED to a representative at each school district

Alaska Reads Act Overview

- Signed into law in June 2022 to support early literacy
- Four key components:
 - **District Reading Improvement Plan (DRIP)**
 - **Department Reading Program (DRP)**
 - **Virtual Learning Consortium (VLC)**
 - **Early Education Programs**

1. District Reading Improvement Plan (DRIP)

DRIP Description

- Required for all 52 school districts serving elementary students in Alaska
- Ensures K-3 students with reading deficiencies receive structured intervention
- Districts must implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to support reading proficiency
- Teachers and administrators responsible for reading instruction K-3, must earn an Alaska Reads Act Endorsement by June 30, 2025
- Uses the mCLASS DIBELS 8 screener to assess and monitor student literacy progress
- Requires evidence-based reading instruction aligned with the Science of Reading
- Progress monitoring ensures data-driven instruction to track student growth
- Family and community engagement is emphasized to support literacy development

1. District Reading Improvement Plan (DRIP)

DRIP Key Findings

- **84%** of districts revised their K-3 intervention plans since the implementation of AK Reads Act
- **58%** of districts reported reading intervention programs align with core curriculum
- **90%** of districts are confident their core reading curriculum is evidence-based
- Of the **K-3 students** who scored below or well below proficient in Fall 2023, the following achieved proficiency by Spring 2024:

52% of kindergarten	24% of second grade
36% of first grade	17% of third grade

- **99% of 3rd graders** progressed to 4th grade, but almost a quarter of those required a waiver

2. Department Reading Program (DRP)

DRP Description

- Supports the lowest-performing 25% of schools with intensive reading interventions
- Participation is voluntary, with 18 schools across 7 districts accepted in 2024-25
- DEED reading specialists provide coaching, mentorship, and curriculum support to schools
- Schools develop Intensive School Reading Improvement Plans (ISRIP) to improve literacy outcomes
- Goal to increase literacy proficiency through structured school-wide reading support

2. Department Reading Program (DRP)

DRP Key Findings

- Launched in 2024-25 with **18 participating schools across 7 districts**
- DEED reading specialists work directly with schools to improve instruction
- **Intensive School Reading Improvement Plans (ISRIP)** developed and implemented in support of struggling readers
- Future evaluations will assess intervention effectiveness and student progress

3. Virtual Learning Consortium (VLC)

VLC Description

Virtual Learning Consortium: 2,824 registrants

- **Professional Development** – six literacy-specific asynchronous courses currently available; three additional courses are in development
- **Digital Library** – free online resources, including research-based courses to train reading tutors
- **Virtual Services** – synchronous reading tutoring, synchronous coaching, and technical assistance
- **Student Resources** – mini asynchronous courses for students and virtual resources/elements for teacher use within classrooms

3. Virtual Learning Consortium (VLC)

VLC Key Findings

- Over **2,800 educators** enrolled in courses
- **2,033 educators** completed at least one course
- Most popular course: **mCLASS Calibration** with 1,891 completions.
- **Keys to Beginning Reading**, an asynchronous course, serves as a pathway to earn the AK Reads Act endorsement
- Future course offerings will expand teacher training options

4. Early Education Programs

Description

- Expands Pre-K access for districts without high-quality early education options
- DEED awarded grants to 10 districts, serving 505 students in Spring 2024
- Requires lead teachers to earn Early Education Lead Endorsements
- Uses Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS GOLD) to assess student growth
- Designed to ensure children enter kindergarten with foundational literacy skills

4. Early Education Programs

Key Findings

- **41.7 percentage** point increase in literacy proficiency from Fall 2023 to Spring 2024 (TS Gold)
- **94.8% of students** met or exceeded proficiency in literacy by spring (TS Gold)
- **505 students** were enrolled across 10 district programs
- **34 early education lead teachers** have received the Alaska Reads Act endorsement
- Expansion expected in future years as funding and participation increase

AK Reads Act Evaluation Insights

Key Findings

- **Reading Interventions:** Districts continue aligning interventions with evidence-based curricula, though time constraints and staffing shortages remain barriers
- **Training Needs:** Schools desire support in using mCLASS DIBELS data effectively, differentiating instruction, and managing multi-grade classrooms
- **Teacher Endorsements:** As of March 3, 2025, a total of 1,642 educators have received an Alaska Reads Act endorsement. An estimated 2,000 educators have completed the science of reading
- **District Feedback:** 73.7% of district representatives agreed or strongly agreed they had adequate opportunities to provide feedback on the Alaska Reads Act implementation

AK Reads Act Evaluation Insights

Next Steps:

- **Survey Expansion:** Leadership and Educator Survey (Spring 2025) will gather insights from district leaders, administrators, and educators
- **Program Evaluation:** Data collection will assess the impact of the District Reading Improvement Plan (DRIP), Department Reading Program (DRP), Virtual Learning Consortium (VLC), and Early Education Programs
- **Improved Data Tracking:** Longitudinal studies will monitor student literacy growth and evaluate the effectiveness of reading interventions
- **Enhanced Training Support:** Professional development opportunities will focus on using mCLASS DIBELS data, differentiating instruction, and managing multi-grade classrooms
- **Reducing Third-Grade Waivers:** Improved Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) implementation will aim to decrease the waiver rate among third graders

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