

From: [Michael Tavoriero](#)
To: [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Draft Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan SMART Goals
Date: Monday, July 6, 2026 1:12:24 PM

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Dear Members of the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan SMART Goals. I appreciate the Board's decision to move from broad strategic priorities toward measurable three-year goals. That is an important step. However, the draft data also confirms that Alaska's public education system needs more than revised goals. It needs structural reform that connects parents, teachers, schools, budgets, curriculum, labor policy, school choice, school-board elections, and student outcomes more directly.

The Board's own draft plan shows that Alaska's foundational academic results remain unacceptably low. Grade 3 English Language Arts proficiency remains below 30 percent, and in school year 2025 only about one-third of students in grades 3-9 scored proficient or advanced in ELA or mathematics. The draft also acknowledges that end-of-year K-3 literacy benchmark performance remains below 60 percent and that literacy and math gaps compound over time. These results require a direct, honest, and structural response, not merely another cycle of strategic planning. [1]

I support the Board's five priorities: third-grade reading, career and technical education, closing achievement gaps, educator effectiveness, and student safety and well-being. But I respectfully urge the Board to strengthen the plan by recommending a full reform package that includes student-centered funding, school-level accountability, parent authority, charter-style governance, performance standards, labor-law flexibility, campaign-participation reform, election-cycle reform, and transparent results.

First, reading, writing, and mathematics must be treated as the non-negotiable foundation of public education.

The plan should require evidence-based early literacy instruction, frequent progress monitoring, targeted intervention before students fall multiple years behind, and transparent reporting of whether students are actually reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Mathematics should receive the same disciplined treatment: coherent grade-to-grade sequencing, mastery of basic numeracy, procedural fluency, problem solving, and intervention when foundational gaps appear.

Second, Alaska should completely reform the foundation formula so funding follows the student.

Alaska's current public-school funding formula is governed by AS 14.17, including the required local contribution mechanism in AS 14.17.410. [2] That structure does not adequately empower parents, students, individual schools, charter models, or alternative public education pathways. Alaska should move toward a transparent student-based funding formula in which each student's base instructional allocation follows that student to the public school, charter school, correspondence program, approved educational program, or other lawful option the family chooses. Additional weighted funding should follow the student for special education, intensive needs, transportation, English learners, high-cost geography, career and technical education, correspondence programs, and other legitimate student needs.

Third, any student-centered funding formula should be designed to comply with the First Amendment as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The State is not required to create a private-school aid program. But if Alaska creates a generally available student-aid or scholarship program, it should be neutral toward religious and nonreligious providers and should not exclude otherwise eligible families or schools solely because of religious status or religious use. *Trinity Lutheran*, *Espinoza*, and *Carson v. Makin* establish that a state may not deny an otherwise generally available public benefit on the basis of religious identity or disqualify families from neutral student-aid programs because they choose religious schools. [3]

Fourth, Alaska should move more authority and accountability to the school level.

Each school should have meaningful authority over its instructional model, staffing recommendations, school culture, discipline expectations, curriculum emphasis, class-size priorities, and budget use, subject

to state law, federal law, academic standards, civil-rights protections, and public accountability. Parents and teachers should not be treated as after-the-fact stakeholders. They should be part of the operating structure of the school.

Fifth, Alaska should expand charter-style and school-level governance models.

A locally consented, parent-governed, student-funded, fiscally limited model would better align authority with responsibility. Each school should have an Academic Policy Committee or equivalent school-level governing body with parent, staff, and community participation. Alaska's charter-school statute already recognizes Academic Policy Committees consisting of parents, teachers, and school employees. [4] Student-based funding should follow the student to the school level so that money reaches classrooms, teachers, student services, and school operations rather than being absorbed by central administration.

Sixth, Alaska should recognize a formal Faculty Senate or equivalent teacher advisory body within local districts and charter-style schools.

Teachers should have a structured voice in curriculum quality, instructional sequencing, student discipline, professional standards, intervention models, and school improvement plans. This should not replace elected school boards or parent-led Academic Policy Committees. Rather, it should ensure that experienced classroom teachers help shape the practical instructional system that students actually experience.

Seventh, administrative overhead must be limited and transparent.

The State should require clear public reporting of central-office costs, school-level expenditures, classroom expenditures, class sizes, waitlists, test-score aggregates, intervention results, and student outcomes. A reform plan that asks for more money without showing where the money reaches students will not rebuild public confidence. Administrative structures should exist to support schools, not to control them from a distance.

Eighth, the Board should recommend enforceable performance standards.

Every district and school should publicly report progress on third-grade reading, fifth-grade mathematics foundations, eighth-grade algebra readiness, ninth-grade credit completion, chronic absenteeism, graduation readiness, CTE participation, CTE credential attainment, school safety, teacher retention, and parent satisfaction. Persistent failure should trigger corrective action, including curriculum review, leadership review, budget reallocation, intervention plans, school-level restructuring, expansion of parent choice, or conversion to a more autonomous charter-style model.

Ninth, leadership accountability should be tied to performance.

Superintendent, principal, and central-office evaluations should include measurable academic growth, reading and math improvement, attendance, school climate, budget transparency, and teacher retention. Leadership compensation and contract renewal should not be based only on tenure, politics, or process compliance. It should be connected to whether students are learning and whether schools are improving.

Tenth, parent rights and curriculum transparency should be made explicit.

Parents should have timely access to curriculum, library and online materials, surveys, student records, intervention plans, and school policies. Parents should receive notice of sensitive instructional or counseling matters and should retain the right to opt children out of activities inconsistent with their family convictions, consistent with law. Mahmoud v. Taylor confirms that public-school policies must take seriously the burden that certain instructional requirements may place on parents' religious exercise and should provide notice and opt-out protections where constitutionally required. [5] Strong parent access is not a threat to public education; it is a condition of public trust.

Eleventh, Alaska should amend PERA so municipal school districts and Regional Educational Attendance Areas may opt out of the Public Employment Relations Act under a lawful local process.

Current AS 23.40.255 allows political subdivisions to reject application of AS 23.40.070-23.40.260, but subsection (b) provides that municipal school districts and REAAs may not reject application of those provisions to employment relations with public school employees. [6] That statutory restriction should be revisited. School districts and REAAs should have local flexibility while protecting vested rights, existing contracts during transition, due process, and good-faith labor relations. Local boards should be allowed to design employment systems that support innovation, staffing flexibility, teacher excellence, and accountability.

Twelfth, Alaska should amend APOC campaign regulations and statutes to protect grassroots parent and community participation.

Parents and local community organizers should be able to speak, organize, print flyers, hold meetings, post

signs, support or oppose school-board candidates, and advocate for or against education proposals without facing severe regulatory consequences designed for professional campaigns or large political organizations. Alaska's campaign disclosure law requires candidates, groups, and persons making independent expenditures to report campaign contribution and expenditure activity, and APOC guidance recognizes reporting obligations for campaign and independent-expenditure activity. [7] Disclosure is appropriate for substantial spending. But the law should include a clear grassroots safe harbor, higher small-dollar thresholds, simple registration options, plain-language compliance forms, warning-and-cure periods for first-time parent groups, and proportional penalties. The goal should be transparency, not intimidation of ordinary citizens.

Thirteenth, career and technical education should be expanded, but not as a substitute for literacy and numeracy.

CTE is one of Alaska's strongest opportunities because it connects education to work, apprenticeship, industry, military readiness, and local economic development. The draft plan reports that Alaska CTE concentrators graduate at substantially higher rates than the statewide average, while appropriately cautioning that the relationship should be treated as correlational rather than purely causal. [1] Students cannot fully benefit from CTE pathways if they lack reading comprehension, writing ability, mathematics, and problem-solving skills. CTE should be integrated with academic mastery, not used to mask academic failure.

Fourteenth, teacher recruitment and retention should be tied to professional respect, classroom order, and instructional support.

Alaska should support teachers by giving them clear curricula, safe classrooms, strong principals, reasonable class sizes, effective intervention systems, and fewer bureaucratic distractions. Teachers should not be blamed for system failure, but the system must be redesigned so effective teaching is supported and ineffective structures are not protected.

Fifteenth, local communities should be allowed and encouraged to build education systems that fit their students, geography, culture, and public expectations.

In communities such as Eagle River, Chugiak, Birchwood, Eklutna, and surrounding areas, a locally accountable school district could provide a more direct relationship among local taxpayers, local schools, local parents, local elected officials, and measurable outcomes. A smaller local district could better manage facilities, transportation, curriculum emphasis, alternative programs, class-size expectations, and the connection between local contributions and local educational results.

Sixteenth, Alaska should reform school-board terms and election timing so school-board members serve either two-year or four-year terms aligned with national election cycles.

Current Alaska law generally provides three-year terms for borough and city school-board members, and regional school boards are elected for the same term and in the same manner as city or borough school district boards. [8] Three-year terms make it difficult to align school-board accountability with the higher-turnout national election cycle. Alaska should amend the applicable statutes so school-board terms are either two years or four years and so regular school-board elections are held on the same cycle as national general elections. This change would increase voter participation, improve democratic legitimacy, reduce the ability of narrow special interests to dominate low-turnout off-cycle elections, and make school-board accountability more visible to parents, taxpayers, and communities. If Alaska wants school boards to govern institutions that receive large public appropriations and shape children's futures, school-board elections should occur when the largest number of voters is engaged.

Seventeenth, Alaska should replace the Department of Education and Early Development with a lean education funding, standards, transparency, and compliance pass-through agency.

As a revenue-savings and academic-diversity reform, Alaska should examine abolishing the current Department of Education and Early Development as a large operational bureaucracy and replacing it with a much smaller state education funding, standards, transparency, and compliance agency. Article VII, section 1 of the Alaska Constitution places the duty on the Legislature to establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State; it does not require a large centralized education bureaucracy. Current law assigns DEED broad duties to administer the state's education program, plan, finance, and operate related educational activities and facilities. [9] Those functions should be restructured so the State's role is limited to constitutional access, student-based funding distribution, federal-fund compliance, civil-rights and special-education compliance, minimum academic standards, statewide assessment, fiscal audit, data transparency, and protection against fraud or misuse of public funds. Local districts, REAAs, charter schools, correspondence programs, municipal school districts, and parent-governed school models should control the educational design, curriculum emphasis, staffing model, school culture, and delivery system closest to students. Savings from reduced state-level bureaucracy should be redirected to classrooms, student accounts, teacher support, local innovation, or taxpayer relief. The objective is not to

abandon the State's constitutional responsibility, but to replace centralized administration with a lean pass-through and accountability structure that allows more communities to control their own education while preserving statewide transparency and measurable performance standards.

For that reason, I urge the Board, Department, and Legislature to recognize that local-control models, including newly formed municipal school districts where legally established, should have room to implement innovative governance reforms within state and federal requirements. A new local district should be permitted to pursue school-level autonomy, charter conversion where lawfully approved, parent-governed Academic Policy Committees, a Faculty Senate, student-based budgeting, transparent performance reporting, performance-tied leadership contracts, aligned school-board elections, lean central administration, and locally designed academic models supported by a lean state funding and accountability pass-through. These reforms should not be viewed as opposition to public education. They are a way to preserve and improve public education by making it more accountable, transparent, academically diverse, and responsive.

The draft plan should also be strengthened by adding consequences for continued nonperformance. SMART goals are useful only if failure to meet them changes policy, funding, governance, curriculum, staffing, or management. If statewide proficiency remains near one-third of students, Alaska should not simply renew the same framework with new dates. The Board should require districts to identify schools with persistent underperformance, publish corrective action plans, report intervention results, and give parents meaningful options when schools do not improve.

In summary, I support measurable statewide goals, but I urge the Board to go further. Alaska's Education Challenge should become a true accountability compact: students must learn; parents must have access and authority; teachers must be supported; schools must control enough resources to be responsible for results; funding must follow students; central administration must be limited and transparent; CTE must expand; grassroots parent participation must be protected; school districts and REAAs must have labor-law flexibility; school-board elections must be aligned with high-turnout election cycles; the current state education bureaucracy should be replaced with a lean funding, standards, transparency, and compliance pass-through; and local communities must be allowed to build school systems that meet their needs. The goal should not be to preserve existing structures. The goal should be to ensure that every Alaska student can read, write, calculate, reason, graduate, work, and participate as a free and responsible citizen.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Tavoliero
Eagle River, Alaska

References

- [1] Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development, Alaska's Education Challenge | DRAFT Strategic Plan SMART Goals, June 4, 2026; public notice requesting comments through August 10, 2026. <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/Attachment.aspx?id=162791>
- [2] AS 14.17.410, Public school funding; Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Foundation Funding Formula. <https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/title-14/chapter-17/article-1/section-14-17-410/>
- [3] Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer, 582 U.S. ____ (2017); Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue, 591 U.S. ____ (2020); Carson v. Makin, 596 U.S. 767 (2022). https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/20-1088_dbfi.pdf
- [4] AS 14.03.250, Application for charter schools, requiring provisions for an academic policy committee consisting of parents, teachers, and school employees. <https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/title-14/chapter-03/article-2/section-14-03-250/>
- [5] Mahmoud v. Taylor, 606 U.S. ____ (2025), preliminary-injunction decision involving parental notice, opt-outs, and religious-exercise burdens in public-school instruction. https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/24-297_4f14.pdf
- [6] AS 23.40.255, Applicability to political subdivisions, including school districts; current provision barring municipal school districts and REAAs from rejecting PERA application to public school employees. <https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/title-23/chapter-40/article-2/section-23-40-255/>

[7] Alaska Public Offices Commission campaign-disclosure resources; AS 15.13.040 reporting requirements; APOC independent-expenditure guidance. <https://apoc.doa.alaska.gov/filer-resources/campaign-disclosure/>

[8] AS 14.12.050, school-board terms; AS 29.20.300, municipal school boards; AS 14.08.041, regional school boards. <https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/title-14/chapter-12/article-2/section-14-12-050/>

[9] Alaska Constitution art. VII, sec. 1, Public Education; AS 44.27.010, Board and commissioner of education and early development; AS 44.27.020, Duties of department. <https://law.justia.com/constitution/alaska/constitution-7.html>; <https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/title-44/chapter-27/article-1/section-44-27-010/>; <https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/title-44/chapter-27/article-1/section-44-27-020/>

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From: [K4CIA](#)
To: [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Strategic Plan Feedback
Date: Monday, July 6, 2026 9:12:56 PM

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State Board of Education,

I am writing to voice my opinion and facts on the state's strategic plan for education. First, I would like to address the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results. It appears that is what has been going on for over a decade. I bring a different perspective as an educator who had to medically resign from the sick schools I was working in when I was precancerous and was found to have lesions in my frontal lobe. I, along with many other staff members, have had to resign or retire due to environmentally toxic schools that have met their life expectancy years ago. I am now a Certified Building Biologist Technician and can tell you that Alaska school buildings are directly impacting behaviors, learning, and illness among staff and students. Adequate toxic testing in schools should be mandatory with technological advances that ensure Alaskan children are breathing in the cleanest indoor air to reach their full learning potential while attending schools. <https://www.igair.com/schools4earth>, <https://www.getawair.com/solutions/school> Investment in new ideas and strategies is a must if the state really wants to see educational improvement. Congress has a bipartisan bill introduced to address this exact issue. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5123>. The NIH has updated its information on mold to include that exposure can cause cognitive issues. <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/mold> Our local High School was tested for mold two years ago and it had a score of 354 for Stachybotrys. Data suggest that respiratory exposure to any mold, not just the particularly toxic ones like Stachybotrys, may be capable of causing brain inflammation, cognitive deficits, and emotional problems. Students and staff also had to breath in sewer gases for two days this Spring without anyone knowing how damaging to the brain and occupants' health this can be. Sewer gas toxicity **primarily causes neurological injury**, followed by cardiac and respiratory involvement. This is a problem that is affecting all students being educated in Alaska's schools since there is no standards to ensure the schools have been properly vetted for Indoor Air Quality. Thanks for your time and the opportunity to share my input. If the states won't address it, we will continue working with those in Washington, DC that can enact legislation to ensure it is addressed. Sincerely, Jennifer (Kids for Clean Indoor Air)

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

From: [Camillia Hester](#)
To: [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Request for Solicitation Documents - Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan
Date: Monday, July 13, 2026 5:21:13 AM

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Dear Purchasing Manager,

Our company is highly interested in the upcoming procurement opportunity for _____ **Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan** _____. To prepare a comprehensive and competitive proposal, we respectfully request a copy of the detailed bid specifications.

To ensure our response meets all necessary requirements, we kindly ask for the following information:

1. Complete bid specifications and scope of work.
2. Submission requirements, including format and deadlines.
3. Any addenda or amendments related to the bid.
4. Contact information for inquiries, if available.

Please send the requested documents and any additional information to this email address at your earliest convenience. Should there be any forms or procedures required to access these documents, kindly provide the relevant instructions.

Thank you for your assistance. We look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the success of your project.

Sincerely,

Camilla Hester
Duke McGinnis Consulting
Procurement Service Manager
1027 Winthrop St, Chattanooga, TN 37405
www.dukemcginnis.com

R-20260707-0018

From: jpdas@eii-usa.com
To: [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Request for Bid/RFP Document for: K12 Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan Alaska Department of Education and Early Development AK Due Date: 08/10/2026
Date: Friday, July 10, 2026 1:52:12 AM

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Education Intelligence, Inc.
JP Das
Procurement Services Manager
3109 Jonesboro Drive
Nashville TN 37214
Fax: 866.394.8084
Email: jpdas@eii-usa.com

Request for Bid/RFP Document for: K12 Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan Alaska Department of Education and Early Development AK Due Date: 08/10/2026

Dear Purchasing Manager:

We are requesting the specifications for this opportunity. Please email to: jpdas@eii-usa.com.

If you have any questions please contact us at 615.972.1856.

Thank you in advance for your time,

JP Das
Procurement Services Manager
3109 Jonesboro Drive
Nashville TN 37214
Fax: 866.394.8084
Email: jpdas@eii-usa.com

Public Notice of the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan The Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development (SBOE) is seeking public comment on the draft Alaska's Education Challenge (AEC) Strategic Plan. Following a comprehensive review of statewide education data and progress toward the existing Alaska's Education Challenge, the Board reaffirmed its five strategic priorities and directed the Department of Education and Early Development to develop Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals aligned with each priority. The draft strategic plan outlines proposed statewide goals intended to guide education initiatives over the next three years. The public is invited to submit comments to the Department no later than August 10th, 2026. Comments should be submitted by email to eed.stateboard@alaska.gov. Pub.: July 5/2026 Post Date: 07/05 12:00 AM

From: [Camillia Hester](#)
To: [EED, State Board \(EED sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Request for Proposal - Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan
Date: Thursday, July 9, 2026 4:54:26 AM

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Dear Purchasing Manager,

Our company is highly interested in the upcoming procurement opportunity for Alaska's Education Challenge Strategic Plan. To prepare a comprehensive and competitive proposal, we respectfully request a copy of the detailed bid specifications.

To ensure our response meets all necessary requirements, we kindly ask for the following information:

1. Complete bid specifications and scope of work.
2. Submission requirements, including format and deadlines.
3. Any addenda or amendments related to the bid.
4. Contact information for inquiries, if available.

Please send the requested documents and any additional information to this email address at your earliest convenience. Should there be any forms or procedures required to access these documents, kindly provide the relevant instructions.

Thank you for your assistance. We look forward to the opportunity to contribute to the success of your project.

Sincerely,

Camilla Hester
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