



Office of Education Advocacy

To: Members of the State Board of Education & Early Development
From: Dr. Deena Bishop, Commissioner
Date: October 14, 2026
Item: 23.0F

Standing General Report

Mission of the Office of Education Advocacy

The Office of Education Advocacy exists to empower Alaska's educational stakeholders through a centralized hub of resources and support. Its mission is to provide clear, accessible information, assist in navigating the education system, and act as a resource for parents, students, educators, community members, and elected officials. By serving as both an advocate and a connector, the OEA helps ensure that families, educators, and other stakeholders have the tools they need to address concerns, make informed decisions, and uphold the educational rights of students across the state.

Progress Update

The Office of Education Advocacy has continued its initial work under the leadership of the Project Coordinator, Paul Reid.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Office of Education Advocacy (OEA) has now been serving as a centralized stakeholder resource for one year, with Mr. Reid coordinating the services and support the office provides on behalf of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED).

OEA maintains records of stakeholder engagements, including the nature of the inquiry or concern, assistance or referral provided, significant follow-up, and disposition or resolution when applicable. Stakeholder inquiries are received directly by OEA and through referrals from the Commissioner's Office, Governor's Office, DEED's general contact email, and the Department's general phone lines.

Over the past year, OEA documented more than 1,000 stakeholder engagements. The ten largest categories of engagement, from greatest to least, were:

1. **Parents** – 206 (18.7%)
2. **Teachers/Instructors** – 153 (13.9%)
3. **DEED Content Specialists** – 103 (9.3%)
4. **Public Comment** – 97 (8.8%)
5. **Education Organizations** – 93 (8.4%)

6. **Replies to Public Comment** – 87 (7.8%)
7. **School District Staff** – 63 (5.7%)
8. **Superintendents/Administrators** – 62 (5.6%)
9. **Public/Miscellaneous** – 52 (4.7%)
10. **Charter School Organizers** – 40 (3.6%)

These engagement numbers demonstrate the broad range of stakeholders utilizing OEA as a point of contact within DEED. Parent and educator contacts represent a significant portion of the office's work, while coordination with DEED content specialists, school district personnel, administrators, education organizations, and charter school stakeholders reflects OEA's role in connecting Alaskans with the appropriate resources and supporting communication between stakeholders, districts, and the Department.

- **Facilitator of MEHS Improvement Ad Hoc Committee:** The Office of Education Advocacy took the lead in facilitating the MEHS Improvement Ad Hoc Committee, which was established to develop recommendations aimed at improving student experience at Mount Edgecumbe High School (MEHS). The committee met throughout the summer, beginning in June and concluding its work in September. The committee included representation from MEHS students, parents of current students, the MEHS Advisory Board, Tribal representation, and MEHS alumni. Meetings were well attended and provided an opportunity for meaningful, collaborative discussion among stakeholders. Through this process, committee members identified areas of concern, shared perspectives and experiences, and developed thoughtful recommendations focused on improving the overall student experience at MEHS. The committee's recommendations will provide MEHS leadership, the MEHS Advisory Board, and the State Board of Education and Early Development with stakeholder-informed guidance as they consider opportunities for continued improvement at MEHS.
- **Consultation to Department of Health on Rural Health Transformation Program:** Mr. Reid is serving as the liaison to the Department of Health on the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), including efforts to reintroduce Presidential Physical Fitness Testing (PFT) in Alaska schools. As a former physical education teacher, Mr. Reid brings practical experience in student fitness assessment, physical education programming, and implementation of school-based fitness initiatives. As part of this work, Mr. Reid presented at the Alaska School Safety & Well-Being Summit, providing best practices, implementation strategies, and teaching resources for Alaska educators interested in reintroducing the PFT program in their schools. The multi-year initiative is beginning with statewide needs assessments designed to identify current practices, resource and equipment gaps, training needs, and future supports necessary to strengthen physical fitness and wellness opportunities for Alaska students. This work will help inform implementation and support for participating schools beginning in the 2027–28 school year.
- **Building Community Trust:** Stakeholder engagement is received with gratitude and aligns directly with the mission of providing support and resources to help all stakeholders navigate concerns at the local level throughout the state.