



Alaska Statewide Mentor Project

Project Summary

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) created the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project in partnership with the University of Alaska (UA) in support of their shared mission to improve academic achievement for students in Alaska. The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) includes two components:

1. Teacher mentoring for beginning teachers
2. Principal coaching for new school principals.

The goals of the program are to increase teacher retention, increase student achievement, and equip principals with the skills to be instructional leaders and effective managers. The ASMP model is based on the nationally acclaimed New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Teacher Mentoring	Principal Coaching
Goals: Increase teacher retention and increase student achievement.	Goals: Increase the retention rate of principals and give them skills to be effective instructional leaders.
Who are the mentors? The mentors are teachers with extensive classroom experience, often in variety of grade levels in urban and rural Alaska. They are released from teaching to provide mentoring for a two-year period.	Who are the coaches? The coaches are retired administrators with demonstrated success as instructional leaders. They have had experience in many educational settings and communities in Alaska.
How are the mentors trained? Mentors receive formal training in eight three-day Mentor Academy sessions held over two years. Topics focus on formative (in-class) assessment tools, the analysis of student work, and differentiated instruction.	How are the coaches trained? Coaches receive ongoing training through workshops and seminars in the areas of instructional leadership, school management, human resources, and student services.
What teachers receive mentoring? 1 st - and 2 nd - year teachers from participating school districts.	What principals receive mentoring? Principals participate on a voluntary basis with permission from their district.
What does the research show? Nationally, research shows that effective mentoring slows teacher attrition by half while increasing student achievement. Teachers who receive quality mentoring gain the skills of a teacher with five years' experience in just two years. Mentors also become instructional leaders when they return to their districts.	What does the research show? The person most likely to influence the learning atmosphere of a school, other than the classroom teacher, is the principal. Alaska needs committed school leaders to accelerate its standards-based school reform efforts.



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What problems does the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project address?

- The teacher turnover rate in Alaska is very high, especially in rural communities.
- Students do not reach their academic potential when they have novice teachers.
- The person most likely to influence the learning atmosphere of a school, other than the classroom teacher, is the principal. Principals often have to learn on the job without any guidance or assistance.
- The high turnover rate of teachers and principals is negatively impacting student development and hampering Alaska's standards-based education initiatives.

How does the project solve the problems?

- New teachers and principals are not left alone in the first years of practice to "sink or swim," but instead are provided with a supportive mentoring model that is more consistent with that of other high-impact professions such as medicine or law.
- Research in the U.S. has shown that effective mentoring slows teacher attrition by half, increases student achievement, and speeds up the rate at which a teacher reaches proficiency.

What is unique about the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project model?

- Alaska's mentor program is modeled after the nationally acclaimed program from the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz. This model has been developed over a 17-year period and is research-based. The model includes:
 - Rigorous mentor selection
 - Full release of master classroom teachers so they can mentor full-time and participate in professional development for mentors
 - Structured face-to-face teacher/mentor interaction at least monthly with weekly follow-up e-mail and/or phone meetings
 - Documentation of specific instructional goals for teachers
 - Ongoing mentoring for the first two years of teaching

What are the results after the first year?

- According to data from the Alaska Institute for Social and Economic Research, the five-year weighted retention rate for 1st- and 2nd-year teachers in districts participating in the Alaska Statewide Mentoring Project prior to implementation was 68%.
- Of 339 new teachers participating in the mentor program in the first year, 77% returned to the district.



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Program Participants

Teacher Mentoring	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007 Projected
Mentors	22	24	32
Beginning Teachers	339	381	450
School Districts	31	36	40
Schools	136	169	200
Principal Coaching*			
	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007 Projected
Coaches	7	9	10
Principals	45	81	100
School Districts	25	27	30
Schools	45	81	100

**program started in January 2005*

Change in Teacher Retention Rates After Implementation Year

Participants	% Retention for 1 st - and 2 nd -year Teachers (00/01 to 04/05 School Years)	% Retention of mentored teachers in 05/06 Year (After Initial ASMP Year)
31 School Districts	68%	77%

Program Budget

	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY2007 requested
EED Budget	\$2,500,000 federal	\$3,600,000 federal	\$5,000,000 general fund
UA Budget	\$1,200,000 federal	\$1,200,000 federal	0
Total Budget*	\$3,700,000 federal	\$4,800,000 federal	\$5,000,000 general fund

**federal earmark funds are not available for the project in FY2007*



Alaska Statewide Mentor Project Distribution of Participating Teachers and Principals, 2006

