

Alaska Effective Schools Framework

OVERVIEW

The Alaska Effective Schools Framework provides an organizational structure for the principles of effective schools. It is a framework that guides the focus of the work in school improvement and provides the foundation for school planning tools and processes used by education systems and professionals throughout the state. It establishes a standard by which Alaskan schools can gauge effectiveness, evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and coordinate ongoing efforts to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

This framework is organized around six domains that current education research and best practices indicate are critical areas of focus in successful schools:

1. Curriculum
2. Assessment
3. Instruction
4. Supportive Learning Environment
5. Professional Development
6. Leadership

These six domains are further detailed in 37 indicators that identify specific practices that directly impact school success. School planning tools, processes, and interventions are solidly grounded in the six domains and detailed indicators. Products such as the On-Site Instructional Audit, Self-Study Process, and the online school planning tool Alaska STEPP are all designed to help school communities apply the six domains and specific indicators to their unique needs and context. The Alaska STEPP online tool includes rubrics for the school-level and district-level indicators to assist schools and districts in assessing their level of implementation of these effective practices.

SIX DOMAINS of EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Curriculum

Domain 1.0: There is evidence that the curriculum is aligned, implemented, reviewed, and used in conjunction with the Alaska Content Standards. A school or district curriculum is an educational plan that defines all content to be taught, the instructional methods to be used, and the assessment processes to be employed for documenting student achievement. It is aligned with state standards and allows for the collection of data to inform instruction. Ideally, all aspects of the curriculum are coordinated across grade levels so that the goals and objectives can be met. In addition to the academic subjects covered, a curriculum includes other learning opportunities for students.

Assessment

Domain 2.0: There is evidence that assessment of student learning is frequent, systematic, and aligned with Alaska Content Standards. Assessment is the process of collecting, recording, scoring, monitoring, and interpreting information about a student's progress, the effectiveness of teaching, and

the school's overall effectiveness. Summative assessments are used at the end of a unit, semester, or school year for a record of accountability. Formative assessments are given on a regular basis to monitor progress and inform instructional decisions. Teachers and other school staff members must be supported by school and district administrative leadership in their efforts to collect and use summative and formative assessment data.

Instruction

Domain 3.0: There is evidence that research based, effective, and varied instructional strategies are used in all classrooms to meet the needs of each student. Effective instruction incorporates strategies and methods to meet the learning needs of students who function at varied levels within a classroom. Instruction that encourages each student to learn at or above grade level builds student depth of knowledge. High expectations ensure that learning is rigorous. Highly effective teachers are actively involved in making decisions about accommodating individual needs, interests, and learning styles.

Supportive Learning Environment

Domain 4.0: There is evidence that school culture and climate provide a safe, orderly environment conducive to learning for all students. Safety and order, an emphasis on academic achievement, and attention to assessment and monitoring, are all factors in creating a supportive learning environment. Schools that foster a positive school climate create a culture of cohesiveness and a high level of morale among both students and the staff.

Professional Development

Domain 5.0: There is evidence that professional development is based on data and reflects the needs of students, school staff, and the district. Well-planned, ongoing professional development involves teachers in their own learning and ultimately leads to improved student achievement. It is based on scientifically based practice and is practical, job embedded and results oriented. Professional learning communities are used to support effective staff development and allow for coaching, mentoring, collaboration, and a collective responsibility for student learning.

Leadership

Domain 6.0: There is evidence that school administrative leaders focus on improving student achievement. Leadership at the school level is a process of guiding improvements in student learning. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They can articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and community to share the vision. The management of learning—its structures and activities—is focused toward the achievement of this shared vision.

Alaska Effective Schools Framework: Domain Indicators

| Curriculum | |
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| Indicator | |
| 1.1 | School staff implements the district approved, research based curricula that are aligned with Alaska Content Standards. |
| 1.2 | School staff use statewide assessment data to systematically review and identify gaps in the curricula. |
| 1.3 | School staff systematically use a review process to determine if the curricula address the learning needs of all students. |
| 1.4 | School staff use statewide assessment data to systematically review and identify gaps in the curricula. |
| 1.5 | School staff systematically use a review process to determine if the curricula address the learning needs of all students. |
| Assessment | |
| Indicator | |
| 2.1 | School staff use formative and summative assessments that are aligned with district approved curricula and Alaska Content Standards. |
| 2.2 | School staff use established systems for collecting, managing, analyzing, and accessing data. |
| 2.3 | School staff use universal screening assessments and routinely administer them multiple times a year in at least literacy and math. |
| 2.4 | School staff use multiple data sources, including state assessment data, to evaluate how school programs impact student performance including specific sub groups and specific grade levels. |
| Instruction | |
| Indicator | |
| 3.1 | School staff use a system to plan instructional practices and programs that are aligned with Alaska Content Standards. |
| 3.2 | School staff implement a coherent documented plan throughout the school to ensure that all students receive core instruction and all low-performing students receive additional support to meet their needs and reach proficiency. |
| 3.3 | School staff use research-based instructional practices, programs and materials. |
| 3.4 | School staff consistently and regularly measure the effectiveness of instruction using data from a variety of formative assessments. |
| 3.5 | School staff hold high academic expectations for student learning and communicate them to students so that students understand what is needed to achieve at or above proficient levels. |
| Supportive Learning Environment | |
| Indicator | |
| 4.1 | School staff use effective classroom management strategies that maximize instructional time in all classrooms. |
| 4.2 | School staff create and implement schoolwide operational procedures that minimize disruptions to instructional time. |
| 4.3 | School staff communicate school-wide behavior expectations that are understood and achieved by students, and provide positive behavioral supports. Key |
| 4.4 | School staff consistently implement a school-wide attendance policy. |
| 4.5 | School staff provide extended learning opportunities, and students in need of additional support regularly participate. |

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| 4.6 | School and classroom environments reflect respect for all students and cultures, and they reflect an understanding of the cultural values of the students and community. |
| 4.7 | School staff communicate effectively with parents about learning expectations, student progress, and reinforcing learning at home, and they implement effective strategies to increase parent engagement. |
| 4.8 | School priorities, goals, plans, and events are collaboratively developed by school staff members, parents, students, and community members, and these plans are communicated to all stakeholders by school staff. |
| 4.9 | The school keeps physical facilities safe and orderly. |
| Professional Development | |
| Indicators | |
| 5.1 | School staff use multiple sources of student performance data as a primary factor in determining professional development priorities. |
| 5.3 | School staff embed professional development into daily routines and practices. |
| 5.4 | Instructional leader(s) coordinate mentoring to support all new teachers in the development of instructional and classroom management skills. |
| 5.5 | Sufficient time and resources are allocated to support professional development outlined in the school instructional or improvement plan. |
| Leadership | |
| Indicator | |
| 6.1 | Instructional leader uses a team approach to facilitate the implementation of a continuous school improvement planning process that includes assessing, planning and monitoring. |
| 6.2 | Instructional leader(s) regularly assist teachers in understanding the use of student performance data to improve instruction. |
| 6.4 | Instructional leader(s) ensure that teachers have access to and are implementing Alaska Content Standards. |
| 6.5 | Instructional leader(s) conduct formal and informal observations and provide timely feedback to staff members about their instructional practices. |
| 6.6 | Instructional leader(s) consistently build productive, respectful relationships with parents and community members regarding school programs and school improvement efforts. |
| 6.8 | Instructional leader(s) regularly analyze student performance data with school staff to plan for the increased achievement of all students. |