



MEMORANDUM

To: State Board of Education & Early Development
Date: May 10, 2023

Thru: Heidi Teshner, Acting Commissioner
Telephone: (907) 269-4583

From: Susan McKenzie, Director
Division of Innovation and
Education Excellence
Subject: Agenda 16A. Division of
Innovation and Education
Excellence Standing Report

Division of Innovation and Education Excellence June 2023 Board Report

The Division of Innovation and Education Excellence (IEE) is dedicated to providing an excellent education for every student every day by focusing division efforts around the five priorities of [Alaska's Education Challenge](#); providing oversight of state and federally funded programs to ensure quality and equity of student services; and providing excellent technical assistance and support to districts statewide.

The IEE Division encompasses nine teams that manage a wide range of programs and activities for the State. These teams include the Assessment Team, the Career and Technical Education Team, the COVID Support Team, the Early Learning Team, the ESEA Federal Programs Team, the Health and Safety Team, the Reading Support Team, the School Recognition and Support Team, the Special Education Team, and the Teacher Certification Team. In addition, staff from each of these teams have been very involved in supporting the department COVID Fiscal Team work.

Included in the IEE Board Report are highlights of work with initiatives, compliance work, and support to districts as it relates to Alaska's Education Challenge priorities.

Director's Updates:

The Division of Innovation and Education Excellence continues to work diligently to support our Alaska's Education Challenge priority areas.

Just concluded, the second annual Science of Reading Symposium was held April 27-30 in Anchorage. Addressing priority #1 of Alaska's Education Challenge (all students will read at grade level by the end of third grade), the goal of the Symposium was: Empower Alaskan educators to connect understanding of the reading science to classroom and leadership practices, resulting in increased reading proficiency for students. There were six pre-conference sessions offered to participants that support AK DEED initiatives on April 27 and the morning of April 28. Some of the statistics for the Science of Reading Symposium include: six keynote speakers, 24 breakout room sessions, 26 exhibitors, 901 in-person attendees, 800 virtual attendees. Speakers joined us from all over the country (from Massachusetts to California) to engage educators in meaningful learning centered around the science of reading.

Thank you to the State Board of Education members that were able to attend, as well as a welcome from Governor Dunleavy. The support, attendance, and participation of Commissioner Teshner, Deputy Commissioner Sanders, and the IEE administrators and leaders were deeply appreciated. A more in-depth report will follow, after data is more fully analyzed. Please mark your calendar for April 19-21, 2024, to attend the third annual Science of Reading Symposium at the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center in Anchorage!



Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #1:

Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade

Academic Support Team

- Statewide Early Literacy Screener – DEED contracted with Amplify in the fall of 2022 to provide the mCLASS with DIBELS 8th edition literacy screener for all Alaska public schools. Districts have the opportunity to use the state-adopted literacy screener free of charge. Districts have the option to seek approval for an alternate literacy screener through a waiver process.
 - In anticipation of the Alaska Reads Act implementation July 1, 2023, participation in a pilot program was extended to all Alaska public schools in late 2022. Eighteen school districts chose to participate in the pilot program. These districts agreed to participate in required training and administer benchmark assessments and progress monitoring measures in the second half of the 2022/2023 school year.
 - In mid-April, 100% of Alaska public school districts shared their literacy screener decision with DEED. 96% of districts have committed to using mCLASS with DIBELS 8th Edition and 4% are seeking a literacy screener waiver.
 - Amplify is working with each individual district to schedule staff training. Training options available to districts are Initial Training, Understanding Your Data, and Train the Trainer.
 - Benchmark windows for the 2023/2024 school year are:
 - Beginning of Year (BOY): 9/4/2023 – 9/29/2023
 - Middle of Year (MOY): 12/11/2023 – 1/19/2024
 - End of Year (EOY): 4/22/2024 – 5/17/2024
 - The Assessment team partners with the Academic Support team on this project, as this screener now serves as one of the statewide assessments.
- Literacy Blueprint – The update to the Alaska Literacy Blueprint is complete. DEED contracted with a facilitator, partnered with Region 16 Comprehensive Center, and recruited a stakeholder group. The stakeholder group comprised 13 members from across Alaska with expertise in birth to post-secondary education. It was shared at the 2023 Alaska Reading Symposium. Physical copies were distributed to Symposium attendees, and digital copies are available via the DEED Reading Resource page, <https://education.alaska.gov/Alaska-Reading-Resources>.
- ELA Curriculum Grant – The districts participating in the ELA Core Grant initiative have met three times as a group since January and have met individually with the facilitator as they are developing their implementation plans. The goal of stage one was to select materials that support a clear and common vision of great instruction with stakeholder participation in the process. The webinars in March began work in stage two. The goal of stage two is to develop an intentional implementation plan — thinking through what it will take to use and support the materials well.
- RTI/MTSS Refresh – The 18 RTI/MTSS Refresh district participants met in January at the Alaska RTI Conference where they had sessions to work with their coach from Safe and Civil Schools. This helped lay more of a foundation for the direction of the work to

develop strong district RTI/MTSS plans. Since then, cohorts have had all day trainings in both February and March. The meet up for April was at the 2023 Alaska Science of Reading Symposium. Participants attended a pre-conference session for continued training and to work on RTI/MTSS plans, as well as attend the conference. Districts will attend summer conferences or an in-state institute to further develop their RTI/MTSS plans.

Early Learning

- District-Wide Early Elementary Program grants that support the Alaska Reads Act are in the process of review. Eleven districts applied for \$3,000,000 to build and/or support early learning in their districts. The goal of these grants is to support districts to improve and/or grow their early education programs. The district-wide three-year grant will support districts to meet the Early Education Program Standards that provide a framework for high-quality programs.
- The Pre-Elementary Grant application period closed on May 15, 2023. There were 22 applications for this year. A total of \$3,200,000 is available to fund early learning programs within districts to promote school readiness and positive outcomes for participating three to five-year-old children and to inform the long-term implementation of universally accessible, affordable, mixed delivery, and high-quality early care and education. The Alaska Pre-Elementary preschool programs are to provide a voluntary, comprehensive, preschool program for three through five-year-olds (five-year-old children who do not meet the cutoff date for kindergarten entry)
- New Hires
 - The Early Learning team has hired two new staff members.
 - Becky Moren from Talkeetna will be the new Early Learning Administrator.
 - Jayne McFarland will be a new Education Specialist 2 based out of Anchorage.
 - Moren and McFarland will both start in July.

ESEA Federal Programs

- In partnership with Keys to Literacy, the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) is providing a free professional development course for educators that meets the required foundational reading skills addressed in the Alaska Reads Act.
 - The offered professional development course for teachers filled up quickly with the last cohorts ending in May 2023.
 - Over the last few months, Alaska Pre-K to Grade 3 educators have participated in a hybrid-online course titled “Keys to Beginning Reading” that totals 48.5 hours. Participants have spent time completing modules in an asynchronous online course and also attend virtual-live meetings facilitated by Keys to Literacy trainers.
 - This contract is managed in partnership with the Academic Support Team
- In partnership with NWEA® and Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education® (CORE®), DEED is providing a joint learning, collaboration, and coaching

opportunity that will empower 50 Alaska education leaders to understand effective literacy instruction.

- The leadership course will provide participants with fundamental knowledge in effective standards-aligned and research-based reading instruction and assessment practices for all learners to support their school and district plans in the science of reading, as required by the Alaska Reads Act.
- The offered professional development course for leaders filled up quickly, starting in February and ending June 2023. The leadership course comprises seven highly engaging sessions in which participants will learn about key elements of the science of reading and explore alignment to current systems.
- This contract is managed in partnership with the Academic Support Team

School Recognition and Support

- DEED is entering the fifth and final year of Alaska’s Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant. The final year of the grant will run from 10/01/2023 – 9/30/2024 with the amount of \$3,945,933.
 - In addition to the original funds for the grant, in April, Alaska received \$11,811,510 in supplemental grant funds to be spent by 9/30/2024 for a total of \$15,757,443 for the budget period of year five.
 - DEED proposes supplemental funds to assist local education agencies in addressing the impact of lost instructional time in literacy caused by the pandemic and continue our mission to support all students reading at grade level by the end of third grade.
 - Supplemental subgrants will be awarded to programs with a strong focus on evidence-based instructional strategies and interventions with a high-quality comprehensive literacy plan. The literacy plans will utilize the supplemental funds outside the requirements of the Alaska Reads Act in support of similar literacy goals.
 - The application will ask LEAs to be creative and innovative in order to offer options for students that align with the Alaska Reads Act within the project performance period. Funding for subgrantees will be awarded to applicants that demonstrate a complete plan for students with the highest need.

Special Education

- The Special Education Director’s training was conducted in March in Anchorage. 41 attendees received specialized training from area experts in:
 - Assessments (Kari Quinto and Athena Hill),
 - Dyslexia (Shanna Johnson),
 - Secondary Transition (Gail Greenhalgh), and
 - Dispute Resolution Specialist (Ann Alexander).

Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #2:

Increase career, technical and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.

Career and Technical Education

- DEED continues to support Skill/Career Camps across the state using COVID stimulus funds. To date, 21 grants have been supported. These funds expire 9/30/2023 and camps will be funded through the first two months of the new school year.
- Alaska currently has seven CTE Student Organizations (CTSOs):
 - Business Professionals of America
 - Association of Marketing Students (DECA)
 - Family Careers & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
 - Alaska Association of FFA
 - Future Health Professionals (HOSA)
 - SkillsUSA
 - Educators Rising

The CTE team is working to support these CTOS as they “build back” after COVID interruptions. Funding will be provided to hold the annual Fall Leadership Conference for statewide student leaders and adult advisors of local chapters. Perennial funding is being sought to support the work of organization directors.

- School district annual applications for federal Perkins/CTE funds are open for next year and DEED staff are communicating with districts to build plans for the 2023-2024 school year. As noted on the last report, for FY2024 DEED will increase the minimum Perkins grant available to our smallest districts award by 33%.

Special Education

- The Special Education Director training continues to include a message of recruiting students for work study positions in special education and regular education where possible.

Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #3:

Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.

Academic Support Team

- Math Professional Development – Professional Learning and Development for Math educators and education of students across Alaska is being paid for by DEED from Title II, Part A funds. There have been 118 educators from grades K – 12 enrolled in various courses, trainings, and other upcoming webinars. These include:
 - 53 educators for Math Recovery AVMR Courses on early numeracy and Fractions.
 - 30 educators in Graduate-level-equivalent Advancement Courses on a wide variety of topics related to classroom instruction in mathematics.
 - 35 educators in Grassroots Workshops, also on a wide variety of topics, but provided in a shorter format.

- These educators represent 29 different districts across the state. Registrations are ongoing for many courses and all courses are expected to be completed by 6/30/2023.
- CLSD Grant Spring Convening – On 4/13/2023, Kristi Graber presented at the CLSD grant spring convening, walking the districts through the new Alaska Reading Page and the evidence-based resources support documents. Participants had requested support in choosing intervention materials for secondary students, so IEE showcased several programs and teacher resources with high usability in both reading and writing/grammar and aligned with the Alaska ELA Content Standards. Some of the written feedback included:
 - *Some great strategies were showcased today and the list of reading resources put together by DEED.*
 - *Gave me some valuable information along with my sub-grantees about core curriculum.*
 - *The intervention and Reading resources page was so helpful.*
- Alaska Reading Newsletter – The Alaska Reading Newsletter is a main source of monthly news and resources in regard to reading support and the Alaska Reads Act. As of April 20, there were nine publications and the recipient list has grown from 169 to about 1,300. Each month there is also a school spotlight. Past newsletters can be accessed here: <https://education.alaska.gov/Alaska-Reading-Resources/reading-newsletters>

Assessment

- The Assessments Team, in partnership with assessment vendors, administered the Spring 2023 administration of all assessments.
 - The Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) was administered to English learners throughout the state from 2/1/2023 – 3/31/2023.
 - The Alternate Assessment will be administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities from 3/20/2023 – 5/5/2023.
 - The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment was administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities from 3/20/2023 – 5/5/2023.
 - The AK STAR and Alaska Science Assessments were administered for the second year during the test window of 3/27/2023 – 4/28/2023.
- The Assessments Administrator and Summative Assessment Coordinator conducted site visits throughout the summative assessment window in April. They observed test administration at Bristol Bay School District, Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District, Kodiak Island Borough School District, Nenana City School District, and Juneau School District.
 - Visits provided an opportunity to deliver support to District Test Coordinators (DTCs), respond to feedback and questions from district staff and students, and to make observations of testing procedures.
 - The site visits have proved invaluable for the team in gathering insights about current practices, areas of need, and perspectives on the assessments. Through continuous improvement processes, the Assessment Team will address feedback by improving and enhancing systems, guidance, and support to districts in the 2023-2024 school year.

- In collaboration with vendors NWEA and DRC, DEED conducted a validation study for both the Alaska System of Academic Readiness (AK STAR) and the Alaska Science Assessment in May 2023.
 - The purpose of the validation study was to evaluate whether the assessment cut scores approved in summer 2022 remain appropriate for 2023 and future test administrations. Cut scores are those scale scores that sit at the borders of two achievement levels and allow us to define proficient and non-proficient performance. This process will allow DEED to ensure the cut scores are an accurate reflection of student performance in Alaska.
 - As part of the validation study, DEED invited stakeholders to participate in meetings. These groups were comprised of Alaska educators representing the content areas and grade bands as well as geographically representing the regions across Alaska.
- The Assessment Advisory Panel convened on 3/28/2023 with newly added panel members. This group of stakeholders learn about and advise DEED on issues related to the design, development, and implementation of an effective and secure statewide comprehensive assessment system and corresponding accountability and support systems. The AAP membership is a diverse group of educators representing the regions and ethnic groups throughout the state.
- The Assessment Team met with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on 4/21/2023. Topics included accountability system adjustments, assessment accommodations, AK STAR and Alaska Science Assessment validation study plans, AK STAR assessment design, AK STAR alignment study results and development recommendations.

COVID Support Team

- The COVID Support Team is conducting formal grant monitoring of districts related to the expenditure of ESSER I, ESSER II, and GEER I funds. After conducting a risk assessment twelve districts were selected for a formal monitoring review. This formal monitoring process is designed to ensure that districts are utilizing COVID funds equitably to close the achievement gap while maintaining rigor and utilizing resources to address loss associated with COVID-19.
 - DEED is currently collecting information and artifacts from districts demonstrating equitable educational rigor and resource use. DEED is conducting interviews with relevant district staff to determine processes utilized ensure that COVID Relief Funds were used to help close the achievement gap and ensure equitable education rigor and resources.

Data and Accountability

- Summer OASIS Data Collection – The team will begin hosting a series of webinars in mid-May for district data managers to help them gear up for the Summer OASIS Data Collection that will begin June 1 and close on July 15. The Summer OASIS collection gathers all enrollment records from 7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023. This data is used for a variety of state and federal reports.
- Community Engagement – The Data and Accountability team engaged with a variety of district stakeholders to discuss proposed changes to the System for School Success (the state’s accountability system) for next year. Prior to presenting to districts, the team

worked with the Technical Advisory Committee to gather a nationwide perspective on the changes. Those changes include:

- Maintain two changes made in the COVID-19 Addendum as outlined in the March 2023 Board Meeting
 - Collapse grade spans
 - Move from a “K-6” and “7-12” model to a “K-12” model.
 - This enables more schools to be able to attain an index score by meeting the minimum-n.
 - This change does not impact achievement reporting as achievement results are still reported by grade.
 - Years of Data
 - The original accountability system allowed schools to aggregate three years of data in order to meet the minimum-n of 10. The purpose was to include more students in the rating system.
 - Challenges with using three years of data included the issue of not all schools had data aggregated for a given indicator. This also potentially deemphasizes growth made by smaller schools. A “bad” year will follow a small school for three years.
- Revise data privacy rule (known as “80/20” rule)
 - The current rule is applied to achievement, growth, and English learner progress to protect student privacy.
 - If percent of proficient/making growth is less than 20, accountability percentage is coded as 0.
 - If percent of proficient/making growth is more than 20, accountability percentage is coded as 100.
 - Non-collapsed grade spans (“K-6” and “7-12”) increased instances of small denominators, therefor increasing the 80/20 rule.
 - The current model was created to protect privacy for smaller schools. The unintended consequences for schools that have a moderate number of students and their percent proficient is close to 20, the accountability percentage is coded at 0 which is not a true reflection of the progress for that school.
 - The team proposed a graduated model based on the number of students in a school.
 - Proposed changes
 - At the school-indicator level, N-size between:
 - 10 – 19 students, 80/20 applied (no change)
 - 20 – 39 students, 90/10 applied
 - 40+ students, 95/5 applied
- The State [Report Card to the Public](#) was completed and posted to the website.

ESEA Federal Programs

- The ESEA Federal Programs team hosted its annual Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Consolidated Application Technical Assistance Workshop in-person the week of April 17.
 - This workshop provided guidance and technical assistance to districts in complying with the provisions under the ESEA.
 - DEED staff provided programmatic and Grant Management System (GMS) application updates to approximately 100 district staff throughout the State.
 - There were three district presentations with a focus on innovative ways they are using their ESEA funding to address Alaska's Education Challenge.
 - In addition to DEED and district presentations, The Bruman Group, PLLC presented federal updates the week prior. The Bruman Group, PLLC is nationally recognized for its federal grants management and education regulatory and legislative practice.
- Based on stakeholder feedback, DEED is exploring modifications to Alaska's English learner (EL) identification procedures as they relate to screeners. Specific EL screening procedures are not detailed in Alaska's approved ESSA State Plan.
 - The first proposal is to lower the score kindergarten (KG) students need to achieve on the WIDA Screener for KG to be considered proficient (and, therefore, not an EL) from an overall proficiency level (OPL) of 6 to 5. An OPL 6 is the highest score a student can achieve on the screener. Alaska is one of only two states that requires a KG screener score of 6 to be considered proficient, and Alaska students in grades 1-12 are considered proficient on their screeners if they score a 5 OPL or higher. This change creates consistency across grades for identification and removes the unrealistic expectation that only students who can attain a perfect score on the KG screener are considered proficient in English.
 - The second proposal is to align Alaska's screener-selection process with that of WIDA's (the designers of the screeners). Currently, Alaska requires that potential ELs take the screener that matches their current grade level, regardless of the time of year. WIDA's recommendation is that potential ELs would take the previous grade's screener during semester 1 and take the current grade level screener during semester 2. For example, current state rules require that a 1st grader flagged as a potential EL in September, would be required to take the 1st grade screener despite having spent very little time in 1st grade. WIDA's recommendation (and a proposed change) would have that student complete the KG screener (if the student wasn't flagged as a potential EL until semester 2, then they would take the 1st grade screener). This change sets up students to better demonstrate proficiency by asking them to complete tasks that more accurately align with their level of education.
- DEED recently determined finalists, held interviews, and selected recipients for the Annual Title III-A Distinguished District Awards. Consideration is open to all current Title III-A districts and eligibility based on English learner Accountability indicators and ACCESS for ELLs participation. Three finalists are chosen and participate in an interview that is scored based on a rubric. The highest scoring district receives a \$10,000

award, and the two other finalists each receive a \$2,000 award. Awards are to be added to their FY2024 Title III-A allocations.

Special Education

- The special education team conducted webinars, face to face trainings, and weekly opportunities for development with the state’s Special Education Directors.
 - Webinars focus on the current work of the department and district requirements that are upcoming, such as:
 - Supplemental Workbook for data reporting
 - District Determinations for risk factors of district special education programs
 - Coordinated Early Intervention Services (CEIS) training for districts found in non-compliance with disproportionality
 - The face-to-face session included:
 - Compliance Monitoring Training
 - Training on the Annual Performance Report/State Performance Plan and the State Systemic Improvement Plan (APR/SPP- SSIP)
 - Small Group roundtable discussions
 - Secondary Transition
 - Assessments and Accommodations
 - Intensive Funding
 - Reading Instruction and Dyslexia
 - Data Collection Activities
 - Special Education Handbook Review
 - Manifestation Determination Hearings
 - Weekly meetings involved a wide ranging variety of subjects and current questions from the field.

**Alaska’s Education Challenge Priority #4:
Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.**

Academic Support Team

- Educator Qualifications – To assist educators with understanding the educator qualifications regarding the Alaska Reads Act, a one-page infographic about this topic has been created and posted to the reading resource page for educator qualifications. Here is a link to the page: <https://education.alaska.gov/alaska-reading-resources/Teacher-Qualifications>. You can access the document directly at this link: <https://education.alaska.gov/akreads/Teacher%20Qualifications.pdf>

Health & Safety

- eLearning: The following chart shows the number of course completions for our highest trafficked health and safety eLearning courses for educators as well as the student facing courses on suicide prevention and those under the Alaska Safe Children’s Act.
 - Course Update: The eLearning course *Overcoming ACES in Alaskan Schools* was updated with new state resources and recent data relating to use.

- DEED’s eLearning program now offers two Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to educators who hold current five- or ten-year Alaska teaching, administrative, or special services certificates.
 - Learners will earn one CEU per 15 hours of eligible coursework completed.
 - All eLearning courses are free.
 - The newest CEU course bundle focuses on trauma-engaged practices in schools.
 - The courses provide information and resources on topics such as trauma-sensitive schools, self-care for educators, stress and anxiety in schools, classroom practices and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The cost of each CEU applied toward renewal is \$50, however DEED is waiving the fee for the first 400 educators to complete the CEU.

DEED Online eLearning Courses	Jan-March 2023	Lifetime #'s
Part A: Suicide Awareness	459	22,309
Part B: Suicide Prevention	207	10,571
Part C Suicide Intervention	170	6,360
Part D: Responding to Suicide-Postvention Guidelines	119	4,254
Overcoming ACEs in Alaskan Schools	114	2,471
Trauma-Engaged and Practicing Schools	49	1,293
Trauma-Sensitive Schools	88	1,817
Classroom Practices	32	853
Emotional Intelligence	35	748
Family Partnerships	15	516
Mind-Body Connections	16	643
Childhood Traumatic Grief	35	943
Self-Regulation	18	715
Self-Care	36	689
Trauma-Engaged Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	12	242
Overcoming Stress and Anxiety in Alaskan Schools (Released Spring 21)	36	405
Opioids 101 and the Opioid Epidemic 101	13	200
Narcan Administration for an Opioid Epidemic	14	285
E-Cigarette Use Among Alaska Teens (Released Summer 21)	18	178

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Training for Educators	598	28,326
Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse & Neglect	1013	34,160
Prenatal Alcohol and Drug Related Disabilities	576	25,306
Navigating Transitions (student courses)	37	1,075
Bree's Law (student courses)	379	2,316
Total Course Completions	4,089	146,675

School Recognition and Support

- Alaska Teacher of the Year – DEED received over 130 nominations for the 2024 Alaska Teacher of the Year. Nominations are open from November 1 to January 31 and students, parents, community members, administrators, and staff are encouraged to nominate deserving educators.
 - On May 2, DEED announced four teachers as finalists for the 2024 Alaska Teacher of the Year:
 - Catherine Walker currently teaches Engineering Essentials, Unmanned Aviation Science, Oceanography, Marine Biology, and has been teaching Biology and 9th-grade science at Dimond High School in Anchorage since 2017.
 - Jennifer Reinhart is a first-grade teacher and has been an elementary teacher at Paul Banks Elementary in Homer, Alaska since 2008.
 - Megan Henry has been with the Anchorage School District since 2014. During that time, she taught art in elementary and secondary schools. She is currently at West High School and her classes include Art Studio, Drawing & Design, Multimedia Design, Painting, and Printmaking.
 - Michelle Heminger teaches math and science at Barnette Magnet School in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD). She has been an FNSBSD teacher since 2011 and has taught in the Bering Strait School District and Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District.
 - These finalists went through three rounds of evaluation by committees and a selection panel, which included interviews, personal essays, sample lessons, classroom/direct teaching recording, and letters of recommendation.
 - The Alaska Teacher of the Year and an alternate will be selected and announced by the end of this 2022/2023 school year by Acting Commissioner Heidi Teshner and/or Deputy Commissioner Lacey Sanders.
 - The selected teacher will serve as Alaska's nominee for the National Teacher of the Year and will be able to participate in programs and activities with other State Teachers of the Year coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Teacher Certification

- TEACH-AK Update – The Educator Application and Certification Hub of Alaska (TEACH-AK) project to move most of the Teacher Certification Office's applications and other services to a web-based environment has faced a few challenges; competing priorities, staffing issues and technical difficulties, but is moving forward toward live roll

out soon. The Teacher Certification Team will begin training on the new system on May 22. Applicants will begin using the new system in June and DEED will begin promoting the new system for online teacher certification applications shortly after.

- The Alaska Teacher Recruitment & Retention Implementation Subcommittee meetings are scheduled to wrap-up this spring. Final recommendations are expected this fall. Recordings of subcommittee meetings, research documents, and other information about the TRR Action Plan Implementation can be found [here](https://education.alaska.gov/trr) (https://education.alaska.gov/trr).
- Longitudinal data concerning Alaska certified educators has been requested by various stakeholders and policy makers. Below is the state level data concerning certified educators in Alaska that has been recently shared:

Turnover in Certificated Personnel in Alaska Public Schools for the 2017-18 to 2022-23 School Year

School Year	Administration Group			Program Group			Superintendent Group			Support Group			Teacher Group		
	Total Count	New Hires & Transfers	Turnover	Total Count	New Hires & Transfers	Turnover	Total Count	New Hires & Transfers	Turnover	Total Count	New Hires & Transfers	Turnover	Total Count	New Hires & Transfers	Turnover
2017-18	599	137	22.9%	423	73	17.3%	54	17	31.5%	962	111	11.5%	7951	1300	16.4%
2018-19	594	186	31.3%	425	138	32.5%	54	16	29.6%	986	177	18.0%	7889	1947	24.7%
2019-20	605	192	31.7%	440	103	23.4%	53	15	28.3%	959	140	14.6%	7592	1575	20.7%
2020-21	605	162	26.8%	443	124	28.0%	52	12	23.1%	966	190	19.7%	7735	1796	23.2%
2021-22	614	176	28.7%	401	97	24.2%	52	17	32.7%	965	178	18.4%	7372	1589	21.6%
2022-23	611	225	36.8%	455	157	34.5%	51	18	35.3%	967	236	24%	7297	1896	26.0%

Source: Certified Staff Accounting, October 1 of each year, 2017 to 2022

1. This report is based on data collected October 15 of each school year. Staff reported were working prior to or on October 1 of the school year listed.
2. Inter-District Teacher Group: The Total Count includes all teachers. New Hires include any teacher designated by the district as new to the district.
3. Intra-District Teacher Group: The Total Count includes all teachers minus the number of New Hires since a teacher cannot be both a New Hire and an In-District Transfer.
4. In-District Transfers include all teachers who are not new to the district in current year and are not in the same job in the same school as the previous school year.
5. Employees in each job group are unduplicated by district and, therefore, may be included in more than one district's Total Count.
6. The positions in each of the job groups above are listed in the following table:

Administration Group	Program Group	Support Group	Teacher Group
Administrative Assistant	Bilingual/Bicultural Coordinator	Audiologist	Associate Teacher
Assistant Principal	Coordinator	Child Study Coordinator	Correspondence Teacher
Assistant Superintendent	Correspondence Program Coordinator	Computer Operator/Programmer	English Second Language Teacher
Business Manager	Director Federal Programs	Counselor	Head Teacher
Consultant	Director of Career & Technical Education	Curriculum Specialist	Online Course Facilitator Teacher
Director, Maintenance/Facilities	Director of Community Education	Librarian/Media Specialist	On-Site Supervising Teacher
Director, Personnel	Director of Curriculum	Nurse	Remedial Specialist
Finance Manager	Director of Education, Elementary or Secondary	Occupational Therapist	Special Education Teacher
Manager	Director of Special Education	Orientation and Mobility Specialist	Teacher
Principal	Director/Coordinator	Physical Therapist	Visiting or Itinerant Teacher
Public Information Coordinator	Other Professional	Psychologist	
Special Assistant to Superintendent	Staff Developer/Mentor Teacher	Psychometrist	
Supervisor	Student Affairs Coordinator	Recreational Therapist	
		Social Worker	
		Speech Therapist	

First Day Vacancy by District 2019-2023 School Years

School District	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Alaska Gateway School District	0	0	0	NR
Aleutian Region School District	0	0	0	0
Aleutians East Borough School District	0	0	2	6
Anchorage School District	46.9	83.2	70.6	88
Annette Island School District	0	0	5	3
Bering Strait School District	0	9	2	5
Bristol Bay Borough School District	0	0	0	1
Chatham School District	0	1	0	1
Chugach School District	0	0	1	1
Copper River School District	0	0	1	1
Cordova City School District	0	0	1	1
Craig City School District	0	0	0	2.5
Delta/Greely School District	0	2	2	0
Denali Borough School District	0	0	0	6
Dillingham City School District	0	1	1	3
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	18.2	19.8	19.8	48.1
Galena City School District	0	1	3	7
Haines Borough School District	0	0	0	0
Hoonah City School District	0	0	3	5.6
Hydaburg City School District	0	0	3	3
Iditarod Area School District	0	0	0	0
Juneau Borough School District	6	14.5	18.5	17.7
Kake City School District	3	1	2	0
Kashunamiut School District	0	0	0	NR
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	15.5	0	28	27.72
Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District	0	8	10	0
Klawock City School District	0	1	0	0
Kodiak Island Borough School District	0	19.5	7	18.6
Kuspuk School District	0	0	17	3
Lake and Peninsula Borough School District	1	0	0	4
Lower Kuskokwim School District	19	18	33	23
Lower Yukon School District	0	6	13	27
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District	2	0.5	0	1
Mt. Edgecumbe High School	0	0	0	1.5
Nenana City School District	2	0	1	1
Nome Public Schools	0	4	2	2
North Slope Borough School District	10	0	21	40
Northwest Arctic Borough School District	19	17	23	26

School District	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Pelican City School District	0	0	0	0
Petersburg Borough School District	0	3	0	0
Pribilof School District	0	0	0	0
Saint Mary's School District	1	0	0	4
Sitka School District	0	0	3	0
Skagway School District	0	0	1	0
Southeast Island School District	0	1.5	0	0
Southwest Region School District	0	0	0	4
Tanana City School District	0	0	0	1
Unalaska City School District	0	0	0	0
Valdez City School District	0	1	3	0
Wrangell Public School District	0	0	0	0
Yakutat School District	0	0	0	1
Yukon Flats School District	8	0	3	8
Yukon-Koyukuk School District	0	14.8	9	1
Yupiit School District	3.5	0	4	0
State Total	155.1	226.8	312.9	393.72

Source: First Day Vacancy Report, Department of Education & Early Development, August 2019 to August 2022.

For this report, a vacancy is an unoccupied certified position identified by the school district. The vacancy may be the result of a new position created because of increased enrollment; a position abandoned by a contracted, certified educator; or a position that was advertised but did not attract a certified candidate that met the district's requirements or needs. A vacancy is reported by full-time equivalency or FTE.

The first day of school is the first day that certified educators would be required to report to work. First day vary from district to district because each district establishes its own calendar.

Emergency Certificates by Districts

School Year 2020-2021 to School Year 2022-2023

School District	SY 2020-2021	SY 2021-2022	SY 2022-2023
Alaska Gateway School District	4	2	4
Aleutians East Schools	3	1	2
Anchorage School District	44	18	49
Annette Island Schools	4	1	4
Bering Strait School District	28	34	45
Bristol Bay Borough Schools	1		1
Chatham Schools	2	3	4
Copper River Schools	4	1	1
Cordova City Schools			1

School District	SY 2020-2021	SY 2021-2022	SY 2022-2023
Delta/Greely School District	1	2	3
Denali Borough Schools			1
Dillingham School District	3	1	7
Fairbanks Northstar Borough SD	7	3	41
Galena City School District	13	3	3
Haines Borough School District	1		
Hoonah City Schools	1	2	
Hydaburg City School District	1		2
Iditarod Area Schools	1	5	4
Juneau Borough Schools	4		6
Kake City Schools	1	2	3
Kashunamiut Schools	2	7	12
Kenai Peninsula School District	7	4	13
Ketchikan Gateway Schools	3	4	5
Klawock City School District	1		
Kodiak Island Schools	12	5	19
Kuspuk Schools	10	6	17
Lake & Peninsula Schools	8		3
Lower Kuskokwim Schools	35	22	45
Lower Yukon Schools	19	25	27
Mat-Su Schools	24	5	6
Mt. Edgecumbe High School			1
Nenana City Schools	1	1	2
Nome City Schools		2	
North Slope Borough Schools	11	6	15
Northwest Arctic Borough Schools	15	11	22
Pelican City Schools		1	1
Petersburg City Schools	5	1	
Saint Mary's School District	1		
Sitka School District	1	3	1
Southwest Region School District	8	2	4
Unalaska City Schools			1
Valdez City Schools	2		
Yakutat City Schools	1		1
Yukon Flats Schools	5	7	1
Yukon/Koyukuk Schools	11	3	8
Yupiit School District	3		5
State Total	308	193	390

Source: Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, Teacher Certification Database.
Updated 4/26/2023

Alaska Educators Prepared Outside of the United States By District
 School Year 2018-2019 to School Year 2022-2023

School District	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Alaska Gateway					2
Aleutians East Borough	1	2			
Anchorage	41	46	48	48	64
Bering Strait	7	8	9	27	39
Copper River		1	1		
Delta/Greely				1	1
Fairbanks North Star	6	6	6	6	6
Iditarod Area				3	4
Juneau	2	1	2	1	2
Kake City					2
Kashunamiut	1			6	10
Kenai Peninsula	1	1	2	1	1
Ketchikan Gateway		1	1	2	6
Kodiak Island				1	4
Kuspuk School District				11	15
Lake and Peninsula					1
Lower Kuskokwim			1	6	31
Lower Yukon	6	6	6	26	35
Matanuska-Susitna	5	5	6	6	6
Mount Edgecumbe	1				
Nome	1	1	1	1	1
North Slope	1	1	2	3	3
Northwest Arctic	1	1			8
Sitka				1	1
Unalaska City	1				1
Yukon Flats				4	2
Yukon-Koyukuk					2
Grand Total	75	80	85	154	247

- Source: Department of Education & Early Development, Teacher Certification Database, March 2023 and October Certified Staff Accounting 2018 to 2022.

**Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #5:
Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships
with families, communities, and tribes.**

Academic Support Team

- Tanana Chiefs Conference – On March 14, 2023, IEE staff were invited to speak at the Tanana Chiefs Conference to introduce how the brain learns to read and weave the implications of the development throughout the District Reading Intervention Plan. Following that presentation, IEE staff were then invited to present at the Tanana Chiefs Education Summit on April 12th, at which participants were engaged in learning how to read from the perspective of a child and exploring deeper into how the brain learns to read.
- Family Engagement/Reading Resource Webpages – DEED's newest reading resource webpage for family engagement is linked here: <https://education.alaska.gov/alaska-reading-resources/parent-resources> This page will house resources for districts to utilize as information for distribution to families. Families may also access the page directly. The May 2023 Alaska Reading Newsletter highlighted the launch of this resource. The plan is to expand the page as the need for information arises. The reading resource webpages can be accessed here: <https://education.alaska.gov/Alaska-Reading-Resources>

Assessment

- The Assessments Team executed a contract with Denali Daniels & Associates to carry out the [Assessment Outreach Project: Identifying Connections and Opportunities with Entities Serving Alaska Native Students](#). Through this project DDA and DEED have collaborated to host a series of discussions and information gathering activities to better understand the assessment needs of entities serving Alaska Native students. The project goals include:
 - Fostering relationships with tribal entities and others serving Alaska Native students
 - Understanding perspectives on assessment use
 - Reviewing current assessment and data use and identifying needs as tribal compacting begins in Alaska
 - Documenting dialogues in a report that captures key barriers, issues, and needs of tribal communities regarding assessments
 - Determining whether Alaska will reengage with the National Indian Education Study.

COVID Support Team

- Formal monitoring being conducted by the COVID Relief Team verifies that districts have channeled COVID funds to improve student safety, and enhanced the well-being of students, staff, families, communities, and tribes.

ESEA Federal Programs

- United Way of Anchorage (UWA) has partnered with DEED and school districts across the state to expand outreach to our students who are experiencing homelessness. UWA is using their Alaska 2-1-1 Call Center to connect students and families across Alaska with

a contact at their school district/LEA, and identify, assist with navigation, and provide information about wrap-around supports and services fitting the needs of the student and family.

- DEED recently developed an Individual Student Score Report for alternate scoring eligible English learner students and submitted it to WIDA for feedback. WIDA approved of the use of their logo on that template, were supportive of DEED's intended use of that resource, and asked permission to share with other consortium members. Permission to share was granted.
- The McKinney-Vento Act Request for Applications (RFA) was released at the end of February with applications due April 27, 2023. The authority for the administration of this grant is the McKinney-Vento Homeless Program.
 - The McKinney-Vento Act guarantees a free, appropriate public education for all homeless children and youth by removing barriers to their enrollment and attendance in school and supporting their educational success.
 - The funding awarded through the McKinney-Vento RFA helps school districts provide immediate enrollment of homeless children who are not already enrolled, provide school stability for students experiencing homelessness, promote school (or GED) success and completion for homeless students, support collaboration between school districts and social service agencies serving homeless students, ensure that homeless students are provided services in such a way that they are not isolated or stigmatized, and provide opportunities for parent involvement in enrollment decisions.

Health & Safety

- Safety & Well-Being Summit – The DEED Health & Safety team has been planning the third Safety & Well-Being Summit on September 13-14, 2023 at the Egan Center in Anchorage. DEED is inviting educational leaders, key staff, and strategic stakeholders, including representation from every district across the state. The purpose of this summit is to improve school safety and well-being in Alaska by both learning and sharing methods to:
 - Promote healthy development through trauma-engaged and restorative practices, improve school climate, and be better prepared for any possible school crisis. Registration is now open.
- Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), Stronger Connections Grant – This three-year grant is out to districts and will be awarded for next fiscal year. ~\$4.5 million is available with a maximum award of \$500,000
 - On June 25, 2022, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) was signed into law and an FAQ document can be found [here](#). It is described as “an important first step toward reducing the risk of gun violence in our schools and communities”. Under Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) funding was made available to state educational agencies (SEAs) to provide students with safer and healthier learning environments. The Stronger Connections grant program is to be awarded to local school districts (LEAs).
 - Research consistently shows that safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments are associated with improved academic achievement and emotional well-being of students, as well as with reductions in disciplinary actions.

Research recommends that effective supportive learning environments have the following goals:

- Students experience a sense of belonging in school
 - Learning environments provide culturally and linguistically responsive practices
 - Students are surrounded by adults they can trust and who are committed to building strong relationships.
 - Learning environments are nurturing and help students overcome challenging and traumatic experiences and provide a sense of emotional and physical safety.
- **Suicide Awareness Prevention & Postvention RSA**
 - The purpose of the Suicide Awareness, Prevention & Postvention (SAPP) grant is to provide an opportunity for schools to support programs, practices, and policies that focus on areas that are related to the State Suicide Prevention Plan Goals and Strategies. Under this competition, DEED intends to award approximately 10 grants if state funding is made available to the department. DEED will give competitive priority to projects that will serve at risk students in: schools designated as alternative schools, correctional facilities and regions that have historically had high suicide rates as reported by the State of Alaska Epidemiology.
 - **Rural Counselor Support**
 - We are coordinating with PalPak and Seattle Children's Hospital to support Rural School Counselors and Rural School Social Workers. We had our initial meeting in February to determine needs, and we met in March to provide time for assistance with specific cases. We will meet once more in April, and then will break until school resumes in the Fall.
 - **Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma Engaged Practice in Alaska**
 - The Trauma Engaged schools professional learning community (DEED, AASB, DOH) continues to meet twice monthly to support Transforming Schools: Trauma Engaged schools' resources, training, evaluation and coordination. The survey of schools regarding their use of the DEED and partner created material closed in December. DEED continues to work with the Regional Education Lab Northwest to develop school specific data.
 - DEED also continues this work by supporting multiple school districts and organizations as they manage new grants expanding trauma-engaged work in the state. For example:
 - Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District in partnership with Women in Safe Homes is implementing the Framework including adding mental health clinicians into the schools. This is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.
 - The Association of Alaska School Boards is implementing a coaching model using the Framework in five districts across Alaska. This research grant is funded by the U. S. Department of Education.

- **Alaska Safe Children's Act:** The [Alaska Safe Children's Act](#) (informally, known as Erin's and Bree's Law) requires schools to cover the topics of child sexual abuse and teen dating violence. DEED created a curriculum in response to legislative action. This curriculum is for students in grades 7 through 12 and is called Bree's Law Education. Assessment of the curriculum and associated materials is being planned with focus groups of teachers using it in May of 2023. Results will be used to assess what needs to be done to improve the resources. A preconference day will be held at the School Safety and Wellbeing Summit in September to help schools learn about DEED's resources and other resources to support the Safe Children's Act requirements.

Special Education

- The special education team is working with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education to increase the involvement of the Special Education Advisory Panel of the council to review and comment on the state special education indicators and targets for these indicators.
- The special Education Federal Grant application is prepared and posted for public comment and will be sent forward mid-May for federal consideration.