



MEMORANDUM

To: State Board of Education & Early Development
Date: March 10, 2025

Thru: Deena Bishop Ed.D, Commissioner
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From: Division of Innovation and Education Excellence
Subject: Agenda 19A. Division of Innovation and Education Excellence Standing Report

Division of Innovation and Education Excellence 2025 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 the [Alaska Education Challenge](#); providing oversight of state and federally funded programs to ensure quality and equity of student services; and providing technical assistance and support to districts statewide.

Career and Technical Education

- The annual Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) Spring Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Workshop was held in Anchorage February 5-7. Attendance was the largest it has ever been with two SBOE members, 26 school districts, 12 university campus representatives, and seven industry advocates present. Training was delivered on the evolving stateside Cross-Industry Workforce Plan, Alaska's six CTE Student Organizations, and Perkins program requirements and resources. Workshop attendees have identified the need to focus on career advising programs, collaboration to maximize limited resources, training and retaining quality CTE instructors, and statewide advocacy for the great CTE programs being delivered.
- The call for nominations is open for 2025 SBOE CTE Recognition Awards. Nominations are due by April 4th in preparation for board consideration at the June board meeting. Five CTE programs have been recognized each of the past two years.
- Career Advisors continue the first year of directly supporting students to prepare for and develop post-graduation career plans. Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Bristol Bay Regional Career and Technical Education Program, and Sealaska Heritage Institute are hosting advisor positions in partnership with DEED and the rootEd model.

Data and Accountability

- The Data Team completed and published the Report Cards to the Public for the state, districts, and schools. The Report Cards reflect Alaska's school performance for the 23-24 school year. Reports are available on the DEED website: <https://education.alaska.gov/compass/report-card>.
- The data team provided webinars, handbooks, and technical assistance to districts for several data collections, including the Fall OASIS data collection, the staff accounting data collection and the Report Card data collection. In order to support the Alaska Reads Act, several data elements were added to allow for new AK Reads Act reporting. Data quality reviews were performed on the data collections to ensure accuracy before use in federal and state reporting requirements.
- The Data Team worked with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) and the CTE team to develop a method for collecting 11th grade pre-eligibility for the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) that will be implemented in the Summer Oasis data collection.
- The Data Team submitted 44 required EDFacts files to the US Department of Education this quarter.

Early Learning

- Two districts have been awarded the District Wide Early Education Program Grant (EEP Grant) for the 2024 through 2027 school years
 - Northwest Arctic Borough School District
 - Alaska Gateway School District.
- The Application for Early Education Program Approval and .5ADM (EEP-ADM Application) was updated and posted on November 14, 2024, and will close on May 15, 2025.
 - The team continues with trainings and professional development offered to districts and Head Start programs using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) overall developmental screen with students, Teaching Strategies GOLD, grantee support meetings and calls, webinar trainings, and community of practice meetings around early education program standards.
- More information on Early Learning grant programs can be found here: <https://education.alaska.gov/earlylearning/funding-options>

ESEA Federal Programs

- DEED's Migrant Education Program team has been coordinating with the University of Alaska Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula College, and Kodiak College to educate school districts on the three campuses' newly operating College Assistance Migrant Education Programs (CAMP). CAMP is designed to support eligible students succeed in their first year of college through academic, financial, and personal resources. Eligible students include individuals who have been eligible to participate in, or who have participated in, the Migrant Education Program (MEP). This collaboration is to help connect migratory children to the CAMPs as they transition out of high school and into their first year of college.
- DEED's Migrant Education Program is required to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, develop a service delivery plan that addresses the identified needs of migratory children, and then evaluate the effectiveness of the program. On February 4,

2025, department staff and stakeholders from across Alaska met in-person to begin the needs assessment process. Over the next year, DEED will meet with the stakeholder working group to complete a comprehensive needs assessment and develop the service delivery plan that will drive the allowable uses of Title I, Part C Migrant Education Program funds for school districts.

- The department's English learner (EL)/Title III-A Program Manager has been collaborating with a University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) professor to add a course to their catalogue based on WIDA's online professional learning. The course was recently approved by the university, DEED will begin advertising the opportunity to districts.
- The department's EL/III-A Program Manager recently held the first EL/Title III-A Coordinators Meeting (mid-January). This will be a quarterly meeting with district-level EL/Title III-A Coordinators to share problems of practice, strategies, resources, provide TA, and solicit feedback from district staff on EL policy and guidance.
- The department's 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) requested and received free in-state professional development for afterschool providers. The United States Department of Education (USED) National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC) presented at the 21st CCLC Director's meeting in October in Anchorage. In November, three staff from NTAC came to the Alaska Out-of-School Time (OST) Conference in Fairbanks that DEED co-sponsors and presented several well-received workshops. Topics included how to write relevant grant applications, how to embed literacy in all afterschool programming, and improving tutoring and homework help clubs.

Health & Safety

- In 2019, DEED and partners designed [*Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska*](#) and supplementary resources to help schools address the negative impacts of childhood trauma. DEED wanted to understand whether Alaska schools were aware of and able to implement the recommended trauma-engaged practices. The Regional Education Laboratory – Northwest (REL-NW) partnered with DEED to study how Alaska's schools were implementing trauma-engaged practices consistent with the framework and supplementary resources. REL-NW recently released a report titled [*Exploring Implementation of Trauma-Engaged Practices in Alaska Schools*](#). This report includes survey results from hundreds of Alaskan schools.

School Recognition and Support

- On September 25, DEED presented on Alaska's Literacy Blueprint during the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) National Literacy Center Community of Practice: Data Literacy for Equity. Alaska was chosen as a spotlight for the creation and implementation of the 2023 update for [*Alaska's Literacy Blueprint*](#) as a model approach.
- The nomination period for 2026 Alaska Teacher of the Year opened on November 1, 2024, and closed on January 31, 2025. Forty nominees across 14 districts were submitted for consideration
 - The recipient of this honor will be Alaska's representative in CCSSO's National Teacher of the Year.
- Milken Award - The Milken Educator Awards inspire educators, students and entire communities to "Celebrate, Elevate and Activate" the K-12 teaching profession and encourage young, capable people to pursue teaching as a career.

- In a surprise award ceremony on Thursday, December 19, 2024, in Nenana, Alaskan teacher Emily Snyder was recognized with the Milken Educator Award and a check for \$25,000. Snyder is now part of a community of over 3,000 Milken Award recipients over the program's nearly 40-year history.
- Going far beyond her commitment as a first and second grade teacher, Emily Snyder has become an integral part of her community, serving on her school's Instructional Education Team and coordinating a Literacy Café for students and parents.
- The School Improvement and Data Team collaborated to design, produce and distribute school designation information to districts. Technical support and instruction were provided to schools and districts that were seeking to understand the designation calculations.
 - Notification went out to districts and schools in late October of 2024 for 2025/2026 ESSA designations.
 - Thirteen (13) schools that had held the Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Lowest 5% designation showed the student growth and achievement required to exit designation. Of the 23 schools eligible to exit, 12 exited into Universal Support, into Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) Schools, and 10 moved into Comprehensive Support and Improvement – More Rigorous Intervention (CSI-MRI) Schools.
 - DEED provides funding, webinars, technical assistance, site visits, and Empowerment Specialist support to schools according to their CSI or ATSI designation.

Special Education

- The Special Education team is currently working on the submission of the Annual Progress Report/State Performance Plan (APR/SPP) and the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).
 - The APR includes 18 federally required indicators that track progress in various areas for students with disabilities.
 - The SSIP focuses on a single indicator selected by the state to set targets, track progress, and implement improvement strategies. Alaska's SSIP has focused on increasing graduation rates for students with disabilities. This area has shown progress, and the department will continue its efforts.
 - Implementation of the Reads Act presents an opportunity to support districts in addressing the special education components of reading literacy initiatives. The new SSIP will focus on early literacy.

Standards and Assessment

- In January 2025, Karen Melin rejoined DEED as the Standards and Assessment Administrator. Her experience as a DEED Content Specialist and as part of the procurement of AK STAR, in addition to her many years as a leader in Education in the state, will provide for excellent guidance for the Standards and Assessment team and for districts statewide.
- From December to January, DEED supported districts in implementing the mid-year administrations of both the Amplify literacy screener and the MAP Growth interim

assessment. Both were administered with few challenges, and the Standards and Assessment team was able to provide guidance and support for unique district challenges.

- The DEED Content Specialists are working to create resources and information for English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science standards implementation. They are preparing webinars to support school and district understanding of the standards as well as standards based instructional practice with an intentional focus on the newly adopted Alaska Social Studies Standards.
- With the release of [2024 National Assessment of Academic Progress \(NAEP\)](#) scores, the Assessment team has worked to support all layers of the educational system in understanding and interpreting the data.
- The Assessment team conducted the winter District Test Coordinator meeting February 8th and 9th, where they met with district representatives across the state to prepare for the spring administration of AKSTAR, as well as other state required assessments.

Teacher Certification

- The Teacher Certification Office is committed to improving processing efficiency by refining standard operating procedures within TEACH-AK, the state's online teacher certification system.
 - Efforts have successfully reduced processing times to eight weeks, with a target of further decreasing them to four weeks.
- Teacher Certification is actively issuing Alaska Reads Act endorsements to educators who have successfully completed DEED sponsored Science of Reading courses.
- The Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program (T-RAP) pilot has officially launched, enrolling future educators across the state in partnership with three school districts and DEED approved educator preparation providers.

Teaching & Learning and Academic Support

- Through site visits, professional development, and district collaboration, DEED has made significant strides in implementing the Alaska Reads Act. The submission of District Reading Improvement Plans (DRIPs) by all districts marks an important step in ensuring that every child receives the literacy support they need.
- The ongoing development of virtual courses and reading endorsements continues to provide educators with essential knowledge and resources, reinforcing the state's commitment to achieving "A quality education for every student every day."
- These coordinated efforts underscore the state's dedication to literacy excellence, with continued focus on supporting educators, refining instructional strategies, and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to become proficient readers.