



MEMORANDUM

To: State Board of Education & Early Development
Date: September 7, 2023

Thru: Dr. Deena Bishop, Commissioner
Telephone: (907) 269-4583

From: Susan McKenzie, Director
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence
Subject: Agenda 12A. Division of Innovation and Education Excellence Standing Report

Division of Innovation and Education Excellence 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 the [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 eleven teams that manage a wide range of programs and activities for the State. These teams include the Assessment Team, the Academic Support Team, the Career and Technical Education Team, the COVID Support Team, the Early Learning Team, the Data Team, the ESEA Federal Programs Team, the Health and Safety Team, the School Recognition and Support Team, the Special Education Team, and the Teacher Certification Team.

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

Update from Director McKenzie

The Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), in partnership with the Region 16 Comprehensive Center, launched the opportunity for 50-60 Alaska educators to participate in a one-year, no-cost department K-12 Reading Specialist Endorsement program. Aligned with the science-of-reading and the International Dyslexia Association's Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of

Reading, the department's program is designed to provide participants with advanced literacy-specific knowledge and instructional practices, and to strengthen the pool of reading expertise in the state.

The cohort will be selected through a panel review of applications with an emphasis on distribution across Alaska's public school districts. Priority will be given to ensuring as many districts are represented as possible. The cohort launch begins September 2023. Successful completion of the program will result in a K-12 Reading Specialist endorsement that may be added to teaching certificates.

At close of the application period, 69 applications were submitted. Applications included representation from 19 districts in Alaska. Applicants will be notified by September 8, 2023 of their participation status.

The K-12 Reading Specialist Endorsement initiative supports the Alaska Reads Act and the first priority of the Alaska's Education Challenge in providing an excellent education for every student every day.

Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #1: Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade

Academic Support Team

- The September 2023 Alaska Reading Newsletter will mark the 13th issue of this online publication that has been key in communication for all things reading.
 - August 2023 marked the one-year anniversary of the Alaska Reading Newsletter.
 - The August 2022 Alaska Reading Newsletter was sent to 169 readers.
 - The August 2023 Alaska Reading Newsletter was sent to 1,599 readers.
 - As of August 31, 2023, there are 1,629 subscribers and it grows each day.
- Alaska Reads Act K-3 MTSS District Reading Intervention Plans were due September 1, 2023. As of September 1, the team had received 82 K-3 District Intervention Plans.
 - 50 out of 53 districts submitted on time.
 - 32 separate K-3 plans were submitted by charter, correspondence, or home schools.
 - Each school district has a DEED Reading Specialist assigned to serve as the primary point of contact. The specialists spent 350 hours supporting districts and had about 275 district meetings/contacts between August 1 and September 1 to support the writing and communication of the District Intervention Plans.
 - The Academic Support team supported district implementation of their Alaska Reads Act plans and presented onsite for multiple district educator in services, provided professional development, and presented to school boards during August.
- The Statewide Literacy Screener pilot program ended in May 2023, in which 18 school districts participated. The pilot program allowed DEED and participating districts to navigate the implementation of a new statewide assessment prior to the Alaska Reads Act going into effect.
 - The state-provided literacy screener, Amplify's mCLASS with DIBELS 8TH Edition, is the chosen literacy screener for 96% of the school districts across the state. Two districts and one immersion school have applied and received approvals to use an alternative state-approved literacy screener. The first state benchmark assessment window for the literacy screener is set for September 4 – 29.

- Amplify continues to work with districts to schedule staff training. Training options available to districts are Initial Training; Understanding Your Data; Train the Trainer; and Assessing with Fidelity for Teachers.
- 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.
 - The Assessment Team is working with Amplify to:
 - ❖ prepare for training sessions on understanding and using the mCLASS data immediately following the fall administration,
 - ❖ formulate plans for data reporting at the state level and for the public,
 - ❖ develop messaging and resources for the interpretation of results,
 - ❖ determine which convenings will reach Alaska stakeholders with important information about the literacy screener results.
- DEED is working on creating an indigenous screener that will assess specific reading skills in at least 8 indigenous languages. The goal is to have a contract in place to begin working on the screener sometime in the fall of 2023.

Assessment

- Following the Alaska Science Assessment validation study, DEED leadership determined that the outcome supported that the standards set in 2022 for the Alaska Science Assessment were validated and should not be changed.
 - DEED moved forward with the performance standards for the Alaska Science Assessment, established in 2022, maintaining the cut scores for all grades and achievement levels as shown on the slide, as adopted by reference in AAC 06.739, [Assessment achievement level scores](#).
 - Results for the Alaska Science Assessment were distributed to districts on August 31, 2023, and will be reported publicly on September 29, 2023.
- Following the AK STAR validation study, DEED reviewed the cut scores to ensure alignment to DEED policies and determined that a policy review was warranted to further review the process, outcomes, and policy considerations related to establishing the AK STAR achievement level scores.
 - In collaboration with the Center for Assessment (NCIEA) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) leads, Brian Gong and Chris Domaleski, DEED planned and held two Policy Review Meetings in August.
 - The Policy Review Committee included representatives from the standard setting and validation study educator panels, district leaders, policymakers, and representatives from higher education, the business community, and a parent organization.
 - The Committee convened on two dates, August 1 and August 28, to consider information beyond the content-based judgments, including a broader range of factors such as whether expectations are coherent and consistent with other meaningful state and national performance measures.
- Although DEED experienced some delays and required additional time to analyze the results of the 2023 assessments, DEED's intent is to establish useful and meaningful benchmarks for the

summative assessments. The results of the Alaska Science Assessment, DLM Alternate Assessment, and WIDA ACCESS for ELLs are available to districts as of August 31.

- In alignment with the goal of closing the achievement gap, DEED remains focused on developing and supporting an instructionally connected assessment system that provides meaningful results for Alaska stakeholders and allows for the delivery of equitable educational rigor and resources.
- By engaging with stakeholders for assessment outreach and development activities, DEED continues to foster trust and buy-in for the new assessments and their outcomes.
- The Assessments Team met with a group of district testing coordinators and technology directors to discuss challenges with broadband outages in the northwest region of Alaska (Nome, Northwest Arctic, and North Slope). The group discussed planned solutions and options for meeting the fall testing requirements without full technology access.
 - mCLASS solutions included:
 - Offline web assessment
 - Paper/pencil with limited internet accessible
 - Paper/pencil with NO internet accessible
 - remote assessment
 - DEED Team in-person administration.
 - Districts are working closely with DEED to determine the solution that will work best for their situation.
- The Assessments Team shared an update about the [Assessment Outreach Project: Identifying Connections and Opportunities with Entities Serving Alaska Native Students](#) with Commissioner Bishop and other DEED leaders. Raina Moulian presented a summary of the project activities to date and the group discussed the action items for fall 2023, to include:
 - Continued sharing of the [Issue Paper](#) and [survey](#) to collect insights about Alaska's K-12 student assessments and the perspectives Alaskans have in their roles as parents, educators, and interested community members.
 - Additional outreach and messaging at various convenings in September – November, to include the Alaska Principals' Conference, the Elders and Youth Conference, and the Association of Alaska School Boards conference.
 - A workshop in November to convene education and tribal leaders to plan activities for generating interest in the National Indian Education Study (NIES) and acquiring parent permissions for Alaska Native students' participation in the 2024 survey.

Data and Accountability

- The new criteria for the AK Reads data collection has been posted to the AK Reads homepage. [20230630 - Fall SummerOASISDataElementsForDistricts FINAL.pdf \(alaska.gov\)](#)
- The Data team has experienced recent staff changes:
 - Amada Mosher Schmitz, SPED Research Analyst III, has left state service.
 - Aiko Zaguirre has transferred into the SPED Research Analyst III position.
 - John Jones has transferred into the Summer Oasis Research Analyst III position.

Early Learning

- The [Alaska Early Education Program Standards](#) were adopted and went into effect on July 1, 2023.

- These standards provide the structure for districts to develop and improve high-quality Preschool programs (4 AAC 60.190).
- DEED has procured Ages and Stages Questionnaire Third Edition (ASQ-3). Ages and Stages Questionnaire - Social Emotional Second Edition (ASQ-SE-2 is a social emotional development screener.
 - This screener is the DEED identified statewide screening tool referenced in section IV of the Early Education Program Standards
- Seven districts were awarded a 3-year District-Wide Early Education Program grant.
 - With support from the Early Learning team, these districts will work towards meeting or exceeding the standards for a high-quality early education program under AS 14.07.165(a)(5) and 4 AAC 60.190.
 - [Early Learning Grant Awardees](#)
- One district was conditionally approved for .5 ADM under AS 14.17.905(a)(2)(A) on September 1, 2023.
 - With support from the Early Learning team, this district will work towards compliance within the two sections of the standards they did not meet.

ESEA Federal Programs

- In partnership with Keys to Literacy, DEED is continuing a free professional development course for educators that meets the required foundational reading skills addressed in the Alaska Reads Act. Keys to Literacy satisfies Alaska Reads Act educator qualification requirements for both teachers and leaders. Between September 2023 and June 2024, Alaska K-6 educators can participate in a hybrid-online course titled Keys to Beginning Reading that totals 46 hours. Participants spend approximately 36 hours completing modules in an asynchronous online course and attend five, two-hour, virtual-live meetings facilitated by Keys to Literacy trainers (totaling 10 hours).
- In partnership with NWEA® and Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education® (CORE®), DEED is continuing to provide a joint learning, collaboration, and coaching opportunity that will empower 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. Between August 2023 and April 2024, Alaska education leaders can participate in one of the six cohorts offered during the fall, winter, or spring session (two cohorts offered per session). The professional development course for leaders is comprised of eight highly engaging sessions in which participants will learn about key elements of the science of reading and explore alignment to current systems.

School Recognition and Support

- DEED is in the fifth and final year of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant for the 2023-2024 school year. The final year of the grant will run from October 1, 2023, through September 20, 2024, with the amount of \$15,757,443.
 - DEED proposed 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.

- The supplemental funds are intended to support and expand project activities currently being implemented across the CLSD programs as well as offer opportunities to new entities, which include school districts and other public programs.
- Supplemental subgrants have been awarded to the following programs, demonstrating 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.
- Tables Below:

Original CLSD 5-year Grantees (awarded in 2020)

Age/Grade Band (Birth-5 / Grades K-5 / Grades 6- 12)	CLSD District:	Original Year 5:	Supplemental Funds:	New Year 5:
Grades 6-12	Alaska Gateway	\$219,787.56	\$195,814.82	\$415,602.38
Grades K-12	Aleutians East	\$173,145.56	\$499,999.23	\$673,144.79
Grades 6-12	Anchorage (Service High)	\$270,984.30	\$496,875.73	\$767,860.03
Grades K-5	Bering Strait	\$261,428.50	\$472,101.00	\$733,529.50
Grades K-12	Denali	\$222,194.15	\$186,158.69	\$408,352.84
Grades 6-12	Fairbanks	\$271,222.38	\$500,000.00	\$771,222.38
Grades K-5	Juneau	\$214,605.48	\$414,276.52	\$628,882.00
Grades K-12	Kodiak (Rural)	\$272,692.82	\$303,741.78	\$576,434.60
Grades K-12	Kuspuk	\$214,605.48	\$89,076.12	\$303,681.60
Grades K-5	Lake and Pen	\$185,895.70	\$132,282.55	\$318,178.25
Birth-5 & K-5	Lower Yukon	\$294,259.32	\$328,882.50	\$623,141.82
Grades K-12	Mat-Su	\$246,496.32	\$146,349.41	\$392,845.73
Birth-5 & K-12	Nenana	\$254,430.87	\$155,298.85	\$409,729.72
Grades K-5	Nome	\$93,986.47	\$41,098.01	\$135,084.48
Grades K-12	SE Consortium	\$230,109.38	\$0.00	\$230,109.38
Grades K-12	Yukon-Koyukuk	\$322,792.09	\$217,490.82	\$540,282.91

Supplemental CLSD Grantees (1-year grant, awarded in 2023)

Age/Grade Band: (Birth-5 / Grades K-5 / Grades 6-12)	One Year Supplemental Funds Districts:	Allocation Amount:
Birth-3rd Grade	(Anchorage) Mountain View Elementary	\$519,252.71
Grades K-12	Bristol Bay	\$250,000.00

Grades K-12	Chugach	\$250,000.00
Birth-Grade 12	Denali Preschool & Learning Center	\$76,350.00
Grades K-5	Fairbanks	\$650,000.00
Birth-12	Hydaburg	\$285,946.20
Birth-12	Kashunamiut	\$287,300.00
Grades K-12	Ketchikan	\$430,620.00
Grades K-12	Kenai Peninsula	\$984,275.61
Grades K-12	Lower Kuskokwim	\$1,000,000.00
Birth-12	Lower Yukon	\$348,789.43
Grades K-5	Northwest Arctic	\$483,270.34
Birth-12	Petersburg	\$220,000.00
Grades K-5	Sitka	\$482,555.25
Grades K-5	Unalaska	\$212,432.57
Grades K-12	Yukon Flats	\$65,773.34
Birth-Grade 3	Yupiit	\$494,923.02

Special Education

- The special education team is preparing to conduct training for the district Special Education Directors and Coordinators. The current agenda supports implementation of the Reads Act through detailed instruction on dyslexia with reading specialist, Shanna Johnson. Additionally, department staff will be presenting on the coordination of Reads Act application and how this important initiative integrates with district programs and the special education programs of students.

Alaska's Education Challenge Priority #2:

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

Career and Technical Education

- School districts are submitting applications for FY2024 Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) grants. Most districts complete their application for funds by September 30, 2023, to be eligible for additional funds redistributed from remaining FY2023 funds. DEED CTE staff review and provide assistance to districts to complete applications by the reallocation deadline.
- In preparation for FY2025 Perkins grants, districts will resubmit multi-year Needs Assessment and 4-Year Plans. The CTE Team is providing regular webinars throughout the current school year to assist and ensure districts are working closely with required Advisory Committees and local CTE Partners.

- The statewide Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) annual Professional Development Conference is held October 2-3, 2023, in Anchorage. District and partner organization representatives participate to develop statewide initiatives and share best practices. Each district is provided \$2,000 of Perkins to facilitate expenses related to participation in these training events.
- The CTE team is working to wrap up COVID stimulus funded CTE Skills Career Camps for students. Over the two years of programing, more than 20 camps were provided to students across the state.

Special Education

- The Special Education Team has secured a federal State Professional Development Grant (SPDG). The grant seeks to implement a program for developing paraprofessionals to certificated special education teachers. Part of this program encourages districts to recruit local high school students for paraprofessional positions with a School to Work program. This is in the initial stages, and the department will be seeking assistance from districts interested in maximizing this possibility for our Alaskan Students.

Alaska’s Education Challenge Priority #3:

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

Academic Support Team

- Many districts are adopting or have adopted University of Florida Literacy Foundations (UFLI) in their intervention plans. The Academic Support Team is providing professional development during September to support the implementation of the program.
- Six candidates were selected to serve on the governing board of the Alaska Distance Learning Consortium, which satisfies one of the requirements outlined in the Virtual Education component of the Alaska Reads Act.
 - Selected applicants represent the four judicial districts in the state as well as varying positions within education including online teachers, district staff, and superintendents.
 - The governing board will meet for the first time in October to define the consortium model, refine teaching and course standards, and conduct a strategic planning session to identify goals for years 1-3 as this project gets up and running.

COVID Support Team

- Through a contract with DonorsChoose, DEED was able to provide project support to teachers across the state of Alaska. Most teachers received approximately \$1,000 worth of classroom supplies, curriculum materials, and items to support classroom instruction.
 - 2,647 teacher projects were funded.
 - 341 schools served across the state both urban and rural.
 - 48 Alaska school districts received support.
 - These projects helped close the achievement gap by providing support for literacy, life skills, STEM, health & wellness, social studies, and students with disabilities.

Data and Accountability

- Report Card to the Public

- The desk audit by the US Department of Education has been completed. The changes have been incorporated into the updated 2022-2023 Report Card and will be published on DEED's website by September 1.
- *EdFacts* – Submission of 8 files to US Department of Education
- Summer OASIS
 - The data collection has been closed.
 - The data team is performing quality control checks on the data.
- Science Assessment
 - The science assessment file has been received and reviewed for accuracy.
 - The assessment data will be published on DEED's website by September 29.
- The Data Manager & Accountability Research Analyst III attended the Student Engagement and Attendance Technical Assistance Center's learning series on chronic absenteeism.

Early Learning

- Head Start received an additional \$1.5 million in grant funding. This one-time additional funding was added and distributed to existing grants.
- The Pre-Elementary Grant (PEG) has nine districts participating in a new 3-year cohort beginning this fall.
- The FY2024 Early Learning Coordination One-Time Grants were awarded to school districts that applied for either or both the Pre-Elementary Grant (PEG) and District-Wide Early Education Program Grant (DWEPP). There are 8 recipients of this grant; 2 of the 8 applied for both the PEG and DWEPP, 6 of the 8 applied for only the PEG.

ESEA Federal Programs

- During the months of August and September, the Title I, Part C Migrant Education Program virtually conducted their statewide annual training on the identification and recruitment of migratory children to school district staff. Once migratory children are recruited, districts provide them with Title I-C funded instructional and support services that address their unique educational needs that result from their migratory lifestyle and permit them to participate effectively in school.
- DEED participates in the Interstate Migrant Education Council (IMEC). IMEC provides high quality professional development and networking opportunities focused on critical issues that have been identified for improvement of migratory children's academic achievement. Each IMEC meeting occurs in a different state and the hosting state has the opportunity to showcase their state's Migrant Education Program. Alaska hosted the Interstate Migrant Education Council meeting on September 20-22, 2023, in Juneau. During the meeting, the department and two school districts, Anchorage School District and Southwest Region School District, work together to highlight some of the quality Migrant Education programming occurring in Alaska.

School Recognition and Support

- The School Improvement team is providing technical assistance and reviewing FY2024 School Improvement Applications and budgets. Current School Improvement data includes:
 - 54 TSI (targeted support and improvement) schools will receive \$25,000 per year, until they exit designation or are redesignated as ATSI, to carry out their school improvement plans.

- 33 CSI (comprehensive support and improvement) Grad Rate schools will receive \$25,000 for 3 years to carry out their school improvement plans.
- 3 ATSI (additional targeted support and improvement) Schools will receive \$50,000 per year for 3 years to carry out their school improvement plans.
- 33 CSI 5% (comprehensive support and improvement lowest 5%) schools will receive \$50,000 per year for 3 years to carry out their school improvement plans.

During FY2024 schools and districts will receive a sum total of \$3,975,000 in 1003(a) grant funding to support school improvement planning, plan implementation, and review.

- In addition to funding, all schools receive technical assistance including regular webinars, one-on-one meetings, and (as able) site visits by request or as identified in needing extra support.
- Per federal and state regulation schools designated under ESSA are required to complete and submit a comprehensive needs assessment, a school improvement plan, and an accompanying budget. Schools undergo monitoring via the ESEA district monitoring schedule. Improvement plans for schools under designation are expected to be aligned with district initiatives and state standards, reviewed and approved by school, district, and state personnel.

Special Education

- As part of the upcoming Special Education Director and Coordinator’s training in October, the special education team is working with DEED’s Assessments team for a presentation on the importance of understanding accommodations for assessments and properly applying accommodations for testing situations for students with disabilities. Additionally, the Alternate Assessment will be discussed and the requirements for students that intend to participate in this assessment.

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

Academic Support Team

- DEED has finalized a new contract with LETRS professional development. New cohorts are being set up in partnership with the Region 16 Comprehensive Center. Currently, there are over 300 educators on the waiting list to take the LETRS course. DEED Reading Specialists will be trained as facilitators to offer LETRS courses after this year.
 - 117 seats will be offered during the 2023-2024 school year.
 - 75 seats will be offered during each year after this for four years.
- Two Fall cohorts of the NWEA Science of Reading for Leaders have launched with 25 leaders in each cohort. There will be two more opportunities for this course coming up; one in the Winter (October start) and one in the Spring (January start).
- Current Keys to Literacy Fall cohorts are full (about 125 educators). There will be Winter cohorts opening for registration on November 6, and 3 more opportunities to join cohorts coming in the Spring/Summer.

COVID Support Team

- The COVID support team has directed a percentage of funds to districts specifically to address Learning Loss associated with COVID. These resources directly support teachers and include professional development, curriculum, and additional personnel.

ESEA Federal Programs

- DEED is partnering with the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) to provide in-person training to district homeless liaisons and other district and school staff that coordinate services for homeless children and youth. NCHE operates the U.S. Department of Education’s technical assistance information center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program. This in-person training will take place in Anchorage on October 4-5, 2023. This training will be an opportunity to support and prepare district and school staff in developing a needs assessment, reviewing the McKinney-Vento law and guidance, cultural competencies, duties of a homeless liaison, using data to measure success, and strategies for collaboration.

Health & Safety

- The following chart shows the number of eLearning 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. eLearning staff are currently working with teams across the Department to better understand the program and capabilities for future training plans and opportunities.

DEED Online eLearning Courses	July 1-Aug. 30 2023	Lifetime #'s
Part A: Suicide Awareness	697	23,456
Part B: Suicide Prevention	437	11,244
Part C Suicide Intervention	270	6,820
Part D: Responding to Suicide-Postvention Guidelines	227	4,639
Overcoming ACEs in Alaskan Schools	99	2,686
Trauma-Engaged and Practicing Schools	295	1,650
Trauma-Sensitive Schools	57	1,961
Classroom Practices	47	970
Emotional Intelligence	37	839
Family Partnerships	26	593
Mind-Body Connections	33	725
Childhood Traumatic Grief	58	1,082
Self-Regulation	35	794
Self-Care	37	775

Trauma-Engaged Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	32	311
Overcoming Stress and Anxiety in Alaskan Schools (Released Spring 21)	39	505
Opioids 101 and the Opioid Epidemic 101	29	275
Narcan Administration for an Opioid Epidemic	18	318
E-Cigarette Use Among Alaska Teens (Released Summer 21)	38	299
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Training for Educators	1408	30,331
Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse & Neglect	1708	36,721
Prenatal Alcohol and Drug Related Disabilities	959	26,831
Navigating Transitions (student courses)	8	1,112
Bree's Law (student courses)	13	2,604
Total Course Completions	6607	157,541

Special Education

- Still in development, the State Professional Development Grant (SPDG) secured by the special education team seeks to provide no cost classes for paraprofessionals to become certified special education teachers. The implementation of this program will require additional coordination with the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, as well as other entities yet to be named. The start date for this program is expected to be with the beginning to the 2024-2025 school year, and if possible, summertime programs may be available.

Teacher Certification

- 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 that have slowed implementation. Applicants began using the new system for renewals in August. Initial applications are being phased in over the next three months. The Teacher Certification Team is using the new systems to issue all certificates, communicate with educators, and manage certification applications. The Teacher Certification Team continues to receive training on the new system.
- The Alaska Teacher Recruitment & Retention Implementation (TRR) Subcommittee meetings wrapped up this spring. The list of recommendations and resources will be made available through a playbook that will be organized by stakeholder groups for ease of use. The TRR

Playbook, the recordings of subcommittee meeting, 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>).

Alaska’s Education Challenge Priority #5:

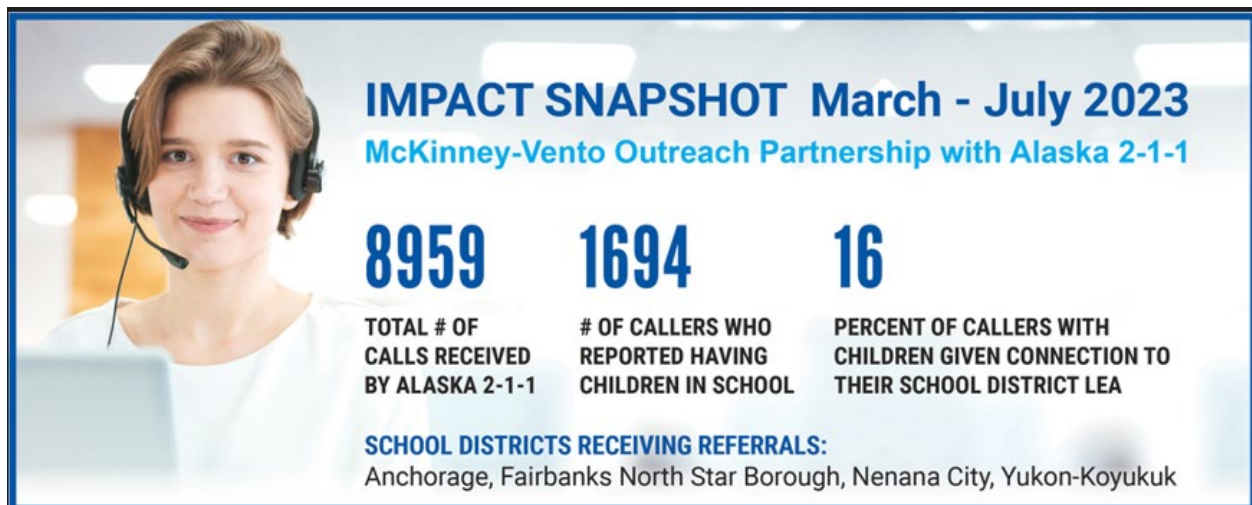
Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.

COVID Support Team

- COVID funds have been appropriated to purchase Health and Safety Items for districts including AED machines, Narcan dispensers, and Vape detectors. These units will be shipped directly to schools and funded through the state procurement office to lessen the burden on district accounting personnel.

ESEA Federal Programs

- DEED is starting the process of convening an English Learner (EL) stakeholder group to explore allowing multiple pathways to exit EL status and re-working the state’s Home Language Survey. An interest survey will be sent to find potential participants and gather initial thoughts on these two topics, and other topics stakeholders think are important to inform potential future meetings. This supports AK Challenge Priority #5 by involving relevant stakeholders within EL Education in DEED decision-making, providing an avenue for more stakeholders to have a voice in DEED’s policy/guidance, and connecting DEED with stakeholders we may not otherwise have an opportunity to connect with.
- 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. The pandemic increased the disruption, trauma, deprivation, and isolation that students experiencing homelessness in Alaska endure every day. United Way of Anchorage will connect the students and families with a contact at their school and other community-based organizations that can provide supports and services that meet the needs of the caller’s original inquiry, as well as other identified needs that arise during screening.



- A Homeless Education Advisory Team (HEAT) was established in May 2023. This team will meet monthly throughout the 2023-2024 school year. The work of the Homeless Education Advisory Team will include: Creating a five-year program action plan based on Alaska's Consolidated State plan, statewide McKinney-Vento data, and needs assessment, reviewing and updating state McKinney-Vento related policies and procedures, supporting the development of annual regional McKinney-Vento/Homeless trainings and other professional development opportunities, and providing input/guidance related to the Homeless Education website content, federal Program monitoring indicators, homeless subgrant, etc. The HEAT will function solely as an advisory body, in compliance with the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Health & Safety

- The DEED Health & Safety team has been planning the third Safety & Well-Being Summit, held September 13-14, 2023, at the Egan Center in Anchorage. DEED has invited educational leaders, key staff, and strategic stakeholders, including representation from every district across the state. Participants convened 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. The agenda for the Summit can be found [here](#).
- DEED awarded 8 Suicide Awareness Prevention and Postvention grants to the following school districts Petersburg, North Slope, Nenana, Juneau, Fairbanks, Anchorage, Mat Su, and Kenai. Each district will receive \$25,000. These are five-year grants.
- The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) is distributed under Title IV, Part A of the ESEA. BSCA is intended to fund activities to support safe and healthy students. **DEED awarded grants to the following nine school districts: Anchorage, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Galena, Hydaburg Kenai, Kodiak, Kuspuk, and Nenana. Awards ranged from approximately \$400,000 to \$500,000 over the three-year period of the grant.**
- Health & Safety staff provided a two-day, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) training to over 70 staff in the Nome School district. Monthly training and coaching will begin in October 2023.
- In August, Health & Safety staff provided a full-day Trauma-Engaged Schools training on the Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practices to schools in Kenny Lake, Ketchikan, and Juneau as part of a grant in collaboration with the Alaska Association of School Boards (AASB). Individual coaching was scheduled to begin in September.
- 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. Results of an assessment of the curriculum and associated materials was prepared for presentation at the Safety and Wellbeing Summit.

School Recognition and Support

- The FY2024 School Improvement Fall Convening was held September 11 and 12 in conjunction with the Safety and Wellbeing Summit in Anchorage Alaska, at the Egan Center
 - This event was open to all schools that received an ESSA designation in December 2022. The intended audience included principals, lead teachers, district liaisons, community members, schoolboard members – anyone involved in the School and Community Leadership Team.

- Topics covered community involvement, planning, implementation, monitoring, review and revision.
- In addition, the DEED Assessment team partnered with the School Recognition and Support team to organize coordination time between the district School Improvement staff and the district assessment literacy staff to align work and provide support for ongoing collaboration.
- Technical assistance by DEED and Empowerment Specialists and teamwork time was provided.

Special Education

- Working with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, specifically the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), the special education team is obtaining input from a wide-ranging source of stakeholder input regarding reviewing the targets for progress from students under the federal indicators reporting. In addition to meeting federal reporting requirements, there are opportunities to develop more direct use of the data for student programs and partnerships. These major partnerships currently include the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the Stone Soup Group (the state's Parent Training Initiative center), and the state special education directors/coordinators group. The special education team will also hold a stakeholder session during the state special education conference in February intended to showcase existing programs and initiatives for comment.