

# **Introduction to the AK Reads Act: Pre-Elementary Components**

## **Early Education Program Standards and Funding**

### **August 2025**

Jayne McFarland, Education Specialist II  
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence





# The Early Learning Team

## Division of Innovation and Education Excellence



**Kristen Spencer**

- ASQ
- Approval to Operate
- PEG Grant Manager
- 619/Special Education



**Supanika Ordonez**

- TS GOLD/Assessment
- Head Start



**Jayne McFarland**

- EEP Grant Manager
- EEP ADM Application
- EEP Standards

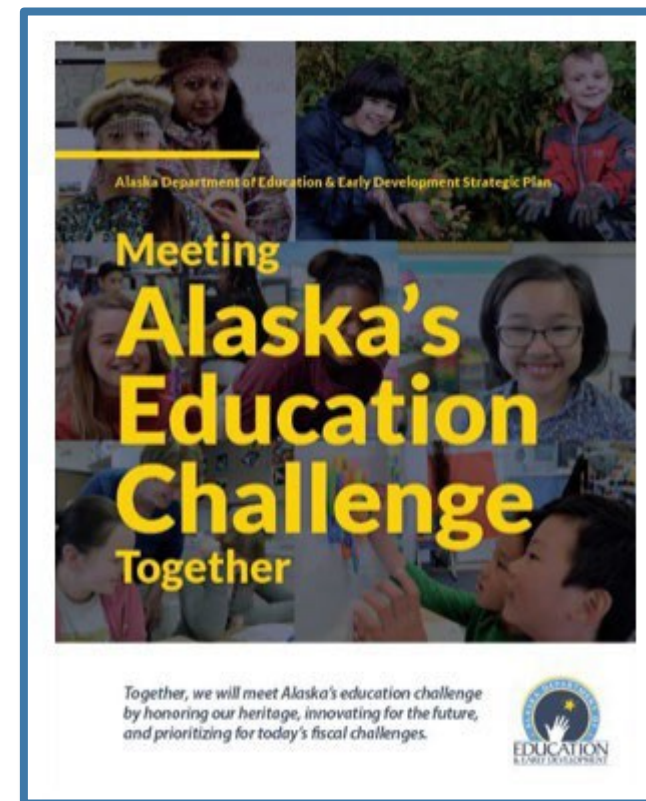
# Mission, Vision, and Purpose

| Mission   | Vision  | Purpose   |
|---|---|---|
| An excellent education for every student every day. | All students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.<br>- Alaska Statute 14.03.015 | DEED exists to provide <b>information, resources, and leadership</b> to support an excellent education for every student every day. |

# Strategic Priorities: Alaska's Education Challenge

## Five Shared Priorities:

1. Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
2. Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
3. Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable educational rigor and resources.
4. Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.
5. Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and tribes.



[education.alaska.gov/akedchallenge](http://education.alaska.gov/akedchallenge)



# Alaska Reads

## #akreads

House Bill 114, Chapter 40, SLA 2022  
Passed May, 2022

---

## Alaska Early Education Program Standards

A framework for early education programs operated by school districts.

Effective July 1, 2023

---

## EEP Grant Program

Provides resources to districts that are working to implement the EEP Standards.

Began 2023-2024 school year

---

## 0.5 ADM Funding

Allocated for programs that meet the EEP Standards.

Began 2023-2024 school year

# Alaska Early Education Program Standards



# Alaska Early Education Program Standards

## Origin:

The Alaska EEP Standards were prepared in response to statute passed May 2022. Alaska Reads Act [AS 14.07.165\(a\)\(5\)\(A\)](#)

- Developed by a team of stakeholders across the course of a year
- Meet statutory and regulatory requirements
- Incorporate requirements unique to Alaska's needs

Took affect July 1, 2023 after being adopted by State Board of Education.

(A) standards for a locally designed, evidence-based program that meets Head Start Program Performance Standards and other federal standards required for early education programs to receive federal funding;

# Alaska Early Education Program Standards

## Purpose:

- Provide a framework for district-wide early education programs that provide pre-elementary classrooms.
- Provide criteria for DEED to approve districts to count 4- and 5- years old pre-elementary students in the OASIS count for formula funding.

[14.07.02\(a\)\(8\)](#)

[AS](#)



# Alaska Early Education Program Standards

**\*Early Education Program Standards are currently being revised\***

## **Legislative mandate passed June 2024:**

- [House Bill 148](#) removed a line from [AS 14.07.165\(a\)\(5\)\(A\)](#)
- The language to “meet Head Start Program Performance Standards” was removed.

Enrolled HB 148

-2-

10 (A) standards for a locally designed, evidence-based program  
11 that meets [HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS  
12 AND OTHER] federal standards required for early education programs to  
13 receive federal funding;

# Alaska's Early Education Program Standards

**I. Learning  
Environment**

**II. Social and  
Emotional  
Support**

**III. Curricula**

**IV. Screening  
and  
Developmental  
Evaluation**

**V. Assessment**

**VI. Family  
Engagement**

**VII. Dual  
Language  
Learners**

**VIII. Coaching**

**IX. Continuous  
Quality  
Improvement**



# Key Points:



Teacher-child interactions

Family engagement

Evidence-based methods

Five developmental domains

Create systems and procedures

# Early Education Program Grant (EEP Grant)

# Early Education Program Grant (EEP Grant)

- Purpose:
  - Develop or improve district-wide early education programs that provide pre-elementary classrooms
  - Become eligible for stable funding (0.5 ADM) by implementing the EEP Standards
- Eligibility:
  - Districts with children unserved by existing quality pre-elementary programs
- Preference given to:
  - Lower performing districts

# Early Education Program Grant (EEP Grant)

- Structure:
  - Three-year grant cycle
  - Legislative appropriation of \$3 million annually
  - Next application period will open spring 2026
  - Application will be found at [Early Learning - Program Funding Options](#)

# Early Education Program Grant (EEP Grant)

## **Cohort 1 (FY24-26)**

- Denali Borough School District
- Galena City School District
- Hydaburg City School District
- Iditarod Area School District
- Kake City School District
- Kuspuk School District
- Lower Kuskokwim School District

## **Cohort 2 (FY25-27)**

- Alaska Gateway School District
- Northwest Arctic School District



# Formula Funding for Preschool, 0.5 ADM

# Formula Funding for Preschool, 0.5 ADM

***Eligible districts will count 4- and 5-year-olds enrolled in pre-elementary classrooms implementing the EEP Standards in their average daily membership count.***

**Origin:** [AS 14.17.500\(d\)](#)

(d) Except as provided in (e) – (g) of this section, a student in a district-wide early education program provided by a school district and approved by the department under [AS 14.07.020](#)(a)(8) is counted as one-half of a full-time equivalent student.

**Purpose:** stable funding for district-wide early education programs that provide pre-elementary classrooms.

# Formula Funding for Preschool, 0.5 ADM

## Requirements:

- Consult with Head Start agencies to prevent duplication
  - See the document [0.5 ADM Funding](#) for resources regarding Head Start Consultation
- Implement Alaska Early Education Program Standards
  - See [Early Learning - Alaska Reads Act](#) for resources regarding implementing the EEP Standards
- Employ teacher(s) and paraprofessionals with required certification
  - See [Early Education Program Staffing Guidance](#)
  - See [AK Reads Early Education Lead Teacher Endorsement](#)

## Not eligible:

Districts that receive state and/or federal funding specifically for pre-kindergarten programs.

| Local/State/Federal Funding Sources {AS 14.17.500(e)}  |   |
|--|---|
| Allowable  | Not Allowable   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Title I, Part A funds can supplement Foundation Formula funding</li><li>• Title I, Part C Migrant Education Program funds can supplement Foundation Formula funding</li><li>• Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program Grants (CLSD)</li><li>• Local funding</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Federal Grants that go directly to the district for pre-kindergarten purposes only</li><li>• Head Start State Grant</li><li>• Head Start Federal Grant</li><li>• State Pre-Elementary Grant</li><li>• State Early Education Program Grant</li></ul> |

# Formula Funding for Preschool, 0.5 ADM

## Structure:

- Applications are submitted by *district-wide* early education programs, not individual schools
- Applications are accepted annually, due May 15
  - See [Program Funding Options](#) for the application and resources
- Applicants are notified of approval by September 1
- A successful applicant will start including preschool students in the fall OASIS count of the year it is approved
- Successful applicants will certify annually that their early education program complies with the Early Education Program Standards
- Successful applicants will submit a reapplication every three years

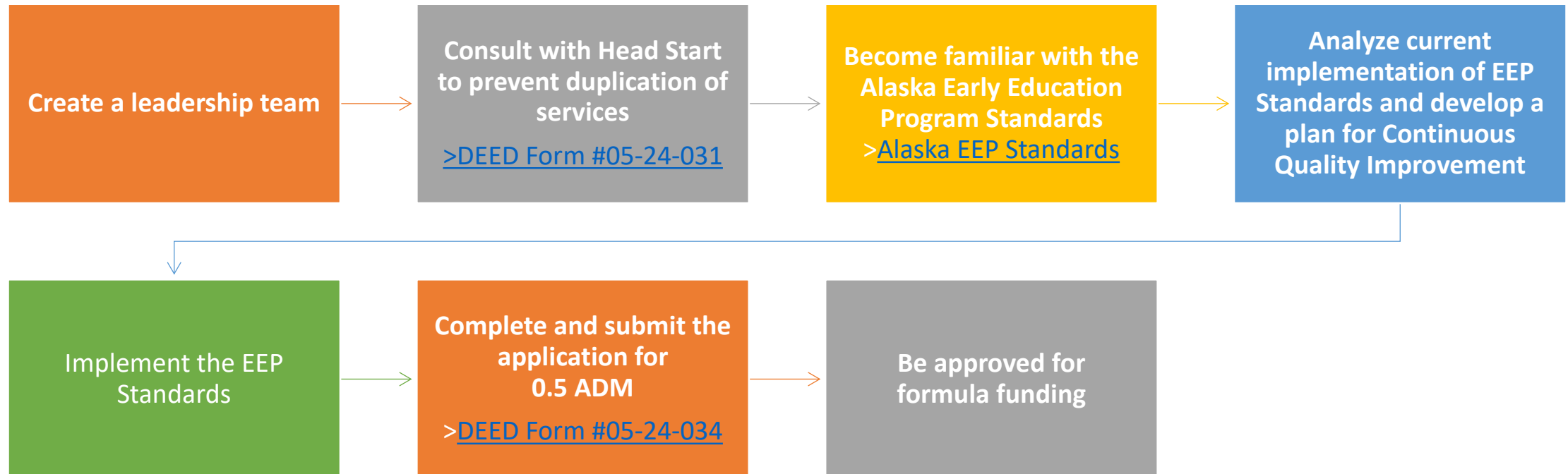
# Formula Funding for Early Education Programs, 0.5 ADM

## **School Districts approved to receive 0.5 ADM Funding:**

- Anchorage
- Annette Island
- Bering Strait
- Chatham
- Fairbanks North Star Borough
- Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Matanuska Borough
- North Slope Borough
- Petersburg
- Skagway
- Southeast Island
- Valdez

- The first district was approved for 0.5 ADM funding in the 2023-2024 school year.
- Additional districts are approved through an annual application process.
  - Applications are due by May 15

# Steps towards formula funding





# Helpful Hints to apply for 0.5 ADM

## Start Early

- A collaborative consultation with Head Start requires time.
- Some components of the EEP Standards have a time frame.
- *Many* components of the EEP Standards require written policy or procedure; writing and approval take time.
- Some components of the EEP Standards may be associated with staffing reorganization or change.

## Utilize a team for:

- Analyzing current implementation of the EEP Standards
- Planning for and implementing remaining EEP Standards
- Working on the application for 0.5 ADM

# Additional Resources

# *Welcome to the* **Early Learning Programs Page**



## *Explore the Site*

[Early Learning Home](#)

[Alaska Reads Act](#)

[Alaska Early Education Program Standards](#)

[Early Learning Resources](#)

[Early Learning Screening and Assessment](#)

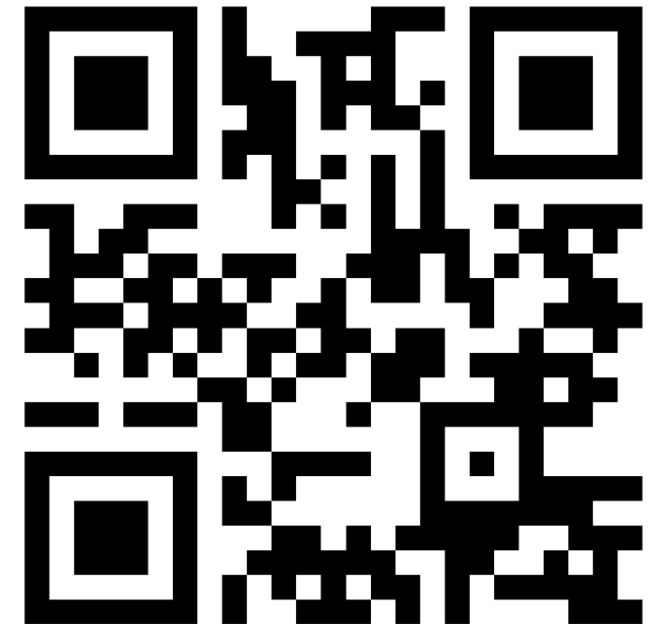
[Family Resources](#)

[Head Start](#)

[Legislative Funding](#)

[Pre-Elementary Approval](#)

[Program Funding Options](#)



[education.alaska.gov/earlylearning](https://education.alaska.gov/earlylearning)

***Planning to apply for the Early Education Program Grant or 0.5 ADM funding?  
Consultation between school districts and any Head Start agency operating within the  
district is a requirement.***

# Early Education Program Consultation

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINAR**  
recording

**CONSULTATION FORMS AND GUIDANCE**  
DEED form 05-24-031  
Revised Oct 2024  
[hyperlink](#)



# Contact Information

## Jayne McFarland, Education Specialist II

Email: [jayne.mcfarland@alaska.gov](mailto:jayne.mcfarland@alaska.gov)

Email: [jayne.mcfarland@aklearns.org](mailto:jayne.mcfarland@aklearns.org) for Google docs

Phone: (907) 269-7974

Webpage: [education.alaska.gov/earlylearning](http://education.alaska.gov/earlylearning)



# Stay Connected



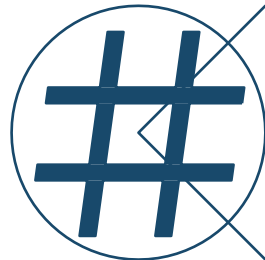
## Website

- [education.alaska.gov](http://education.alaska.gov)



## Phone

- Main Line: (907) 465-2800
- Teacher Certification: (907) 465-2831



## Social Media

- @AlaskaDEED