

GREAT Alaska Program

The GREAT Alaska Program (Growing Reading Excellence and Alaskan Teachers) is a statewide initiative designed to support and develop paraprofessionals in rural Alaska who are passionate about improving student outcomes and advancing their careers in education. Through a collaborative partnership among the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and the Stone Soup Group, the program provides comprehensive support for participants pursuing Special Education teacher certification.

A central feature of the GREAT Alaska Program is 100% tuition coverage for UAF coursework leading to certification, making higher education accessible and affordable. Participants benefit from online classes, allowing flexibility for working professionals in remote communities, as well as guidance from experienced teachers and supportive peer networks. In addition, participants receive coaching and professional development, helping to strengthen instructional skills and promote professional growth.

The program emphasizes local impact, empowering participants to become driving forces in student achievement while remaining rooted in their communities. By valuing and celebrating participants' heritage and culture, GREAT Alaska promotes culturally responsive teaching and community-based educational leadership. Participants not only grow professionally but also become essential contributors to a broader effort to improve educational outcomes across rural Alaska.

Priority enrollment is given to actively serving paraprofessionals in rural Alaska schools, with limited space available. The program represents a meaningful pathway for individuals seeking to transform their passion for education into long-term career advancement while directly supporting Alaska's students. Through targeted preparation, financial support, and mentorship, the GREAT Alaska Program is building a stronger, more sustainable educator workforce for the state.