

State Board of Education and Early Development

Annual Report to the Legislature

January 2025



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State Board of Education Members



James K. Fields
State Board Chair
REAA Representative

03/01/2023 - Date Reappointed
03/01/2028 - Term Expires



Sally Stockhausen
First Vice Chair
First Judicial District

01/12/2021 - Date Reappointed
03/01/2026 – Term Expires



Lorri Van Diest
Second Vice Chair
Third Judicial District

03/01/2020- Date Reappointed
03/01/2025- Term Expires

Vacant
Second Judicial District



Barbara Tyndall
Fourth Judicial District

07/10/2023 - Date Appointed
03/01/2028 - Term Expires



Pamela Dupras
At-Large

07/10/2023 - Date Appointed
03/01/2028 - Term Expires



Kimberly Bergey
At-Large

07/29/2024- Date Appointed
07/29/2029 – Term Expires



LTC James Fowley
Military Advisor



Joshua Pak
Student Advisor

Alaska State Constitution Education Clause

Section 7.1 - Public Education.

The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution.

AS 14.07.168. Report to the Legislature

Not later than the 30th legislative day of each regular session of the legislature, the board shall prepare and present in person to the legislative committees having jurisdiction over education an annual report that describes the efforts of the board to develop, maintain, and continuously improve a comprehensive quality public education system, as provided for under the bylaws of the board. The report must include:

1. a summary of the resolves and rationales provided in support of policy decisions made under AS 14.03.015;
2. program and curriculum changes made, discussed, or recommended in meetings held under AS 14.07.125;
3. additional information relevant to efforts made to improve and maintain the public education system.

Mission, Vision, and Purpose



MISSION
An excellent education for every student every day.

VISION
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.
- Alaska Statute 14.03.015

PURPOSE
DEED exists to provide information, resources, and leadership to support an excellent education for every student every day.

Alaska's Education Challenge Overview

Alaska's Education Challenge

Over the last eight years, parents, students, educators, policymakers, tribal leaders, partner organizations, and local school boards have stepped forward to answer Alaska's call to action to create a shared vision for improving our public education system – the result is [Alaska's Education Challenge](https://education.alaska.gov/akedchallenge)¹.

That vision starts with three shared commitments: (1) Increase Student Success, (2) Cultivate Safety and Well-Being, and (3) Support Responsible and Reflective Learners.

In order to meet Alaska's education challenges, we are addressing our public education system through three components:

1. A call to action: Shared Commitments
2. A focus of efforts: Measurable Goals
3. A prioritization of change: Targeted Strategies

¹ <https://education.alaska.gov/akedchallenge>

Regulations, Resolutions, and Other Board Actions

Regulation Changes

On Wednesday, January 17, 2024, the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved the proposed regulations relating to:

- Assessment Participation Guidelines
 - 4 AAC 06.775 (a), administering statewide assessments to students with disabilities, whereby an updated version of the *Participation Guidelines for Inclusion of Alaska Students in State Assessments*.
- Assessment Cut Scores for the Alaska System of Academic Readiness (AK STAR)
 - 4 AAC 06.739 (b), achievement levels for English Language Arts and Mathematics; and 4 AAC 06.822 (b), accountability sub scores.

On July 1, 2024, the Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) Program regulations were approved for a public comment period. The proposed regulations were in response to the passage of House Bill (HB) 193, Internet for Schools, which became law on March 27, 2024 (Chapter 1, SLA 2024). The effective date for this law was immediate under AS 01.10.070(c).

On October 9, 2024, four regulation packages were approved for a period of public comment:

- Social Studies Standards, 4 AAC 04.140 Content Standards, were revised to include Civics and Inquiry standards and updates to Geography, History and Economics.
- Student Advisor Elect to the State Board of Education, 4 AAC 03.025(c) Advisory members of state board, opens the nomination process to all students, not just students associated with the Alaska Association of Student Governments. The changes provide the board with a comprehensive list of nominees which to choose from.
- Office of Education Advocacy, 4 AAC 10.010 Office of education advocacy established, creates an office that will serve as a contact resource.
- Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) regulations, 4 AAC 33.605-4 AAC 33.690, were put back out for a second round of public comment.

During the December 5, 2024, meeting, the board approved the following regulations:

- Social Studies Standards, 4 AAC 04.140 Content Standards.
- Student Advisor Elect to the State Board of Education, 4 AAC 03.025(c) Advisory members of state board.
- Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) Program, 4 AAC 33.605-4 AAC 33.690.

Resolutions and Other Board Actions

January 17, 2024

In January 2024 the board reviewed and approved the State Tribal Education Compact Schools Demonstration Legislative Report.

The 2023 State Board of Education and Early Development Report to the Legislature was approved.

February 27, 2024

In February 2024 the board approved the School Construction and Major Maintenance list. The final lists for the School Construction Grant Fund and the Major Maintenance Grant Fund were reviewed.

The board approved nominees for the Culturally Relevant Career and Technical Education (CRCTE) Program Recognition awards. The CTCTE Committee reviewed nominations for outstanding Career and Technical Education programs and approved:

- Effective Student Engagement: Kusilvak Career Academy, Lower Yukon School District.
- Engineering Pathway: Lower Kuskokwim School District, Paul Salzman.
- Work-Based Learning: Youth to Work Program, Coastal Village Region Fund CDQ Group, Madeline Tulik and Nathaniel Betz.
- Effective Student Engagement and Work-Based Learning: Alaska Transaction Outcomes Project, SERRC.
- Effective Student Engagement: Welding Program, Yukon Koyukuk School District, Anthony Cavan.

June 6, 2024

In June 2024, two members for the Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board were appointed. Howard Amos was approved to serve as the Alumni Representative and Dorothy Chase was appointed as the Parent Representative.

October 9, 2024

The board was asked to consider a resolution related to cell phone restrictions in Alaska schools. The board voted to adopt the resolution and directed the department staff to draft a model policy to limit cell phone usage during school hours for local school boards to consider and adopt.

State Board of Education: Subcommittees, Boards, and Commissions Assignments

New Officers, Members, and Staff

The Board has five committees with the following membership:

Reading	CTE and Cultural Education	Safety and Well Being	Tribal Compacting	Effective Educators
Sally Stockhausen	Lorri Van Diest	Lorri Van Diest	Pamela Dupras	Sally Stockhausen
Pamela Dupras	Barbara Tyndall	Barbara Tyndall	James Fields	James Fields

In January 2024 the appointments of Joel Isaak as the Deputy Commissioner, Tama Carson as the Director of Administrative Services, and Kathy Moffitt as the Director of the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence for the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) were approved by the board.

In June 2024 the board nominated and elected officers for Chair, First Vice-Chair, and Second Vice-Chair. The board elected James Fields as Chair, Sally Stockhausen as First Vice-Chair, and Lorri Van Diest as Second Vice-Chair.

During the July 2024 meeting, the board approved the appointment of Karen Morrison as the Deputy Commissioner.

In October 2024 new Board Member Kimberly Bergey was sworn in.

The board approved the appointment of Bryan Zadalis in October 2024 as the Special Assistant to the Commissioner/Public Information Officer.

In December 2024 the board approved the appointments of Heather Heineken as the Director of the Division of Finance and Support Services and Jacob Almeida as the Special Assistant/ Legislative Liaison.

Boards and Commissions

Boards and Commissions	Member
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE)	Lorri Van Diest
Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education	Sally Stockhausen
Public School Trust Fund Advisory Committee (AS 37.14.120)	James Fields Barbara Tyndall
Education Commission of the States	James Fields Pamela Dupras (alternate)
Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board	Sally Stockhausen

Correspondence School Report: HB202

Correspondence Allotment Reporting

Introduction

The language of Ch. 47, SLA 24 (HB202) included a requirement for each correspondence study program to submit a report to DEED that includes (1) the number of students enrolled in the program; (2) the demographic information of the students enrolled in the program; (3) an accounting of student allotment funds that have been disbursed; (4) assessment and proficiency scores of the students enrolled in the program; and (5) a review of curricula that have been provided by the program or purchased using allotment funds. HB202 further required that DEED include the information in its annual report to the legislature. The provision is repealed July 1, 2025.

Reporting Process

To ensure complete and audited data, the department is reporting on FY2024 student enrollment and allotment funds. To avoid duplicative reporting requests to districts, DEED utilized FY2024 data collections for student enrollment, demographics, and assessments. The department developed a template for reporting on student allotments and expenditures. After feedback from districts with the largest correspondence programs for a reasonable way to meet the review of curricula requirement, the template also included a request for the board policies and district procedures relating to curricula review.

Notes and Observations

The report reflects data collected from school districts on their correspondence programs. The allotment and expenditure data are sourced from district submissions.

Allotments

- Districts often prorate annual allotments based on factors such as full-time equivalency (FTE) or the date of enrollment. This approach allows for equitable allocation across the school year.
- Additional benefits, such as internet reimbursements or activity fees, paid from general funds are not included in this report. These expenditures could be added in the future if deemed directly tied to student benefit.

Expenditures

- Expenditures are reported by required object codes in the department's *Uniform Chart of Accounts*. This includes instruction-related costs charged to allotments but excludes general operations.
- Some districts have expenditures exceeding the eligible allotment for the year, reflecting the use of prior-year unspent funds carried forward into the current fiscal year.

Full report has been submitted with this document.

Alaska's Education Challenge 2024

Priority One: Support all students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.

Highlights

K-3 Literacy Screener – mCLASS DIBELS 8

The Alaska Reads Act prioritizes the early identification of reading challenges by requiring universal screening for all kindergarten through third-grade students. DEED adopted a statewide literacy screener, DIBELS 8th Edition (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). This tool is an evidence-based assessment system designed to measure foundational literacy skills for students. It provides educators with insights into students' reading proficiency through quick, efficient, one-on-one assessments. Fifty-one districts, representing approximately 45,000 students participated in kindergarten through third grade.

Data from mCLASS DIBELS 8 enables educators to measure foundational reading skills that support the development of proficient reading. It identifies students requiring additional reading support. Progress monitoring between screening periods allows teachers to monitor growth, adjust instruction, and ensure students stay on track to meet grade-level expectations. To support this initiative, teachers engaged in professional development to ensure accurate assessment administration and effective use of data to inform instruction. These practices strive to close reading gaps early, ensuring students achieve grade-level proficiency by the end of third grade.

The 2023-24 school year marked a transformative period for early literacy in Alaska, with notable improvements across grade levels. At the start of the year, 41 percent of students met early literacy benchmarks, by year's end, this rose to 57 percent. Gains were seen among kindergarten students, whose proficiency rates increased from 24 percent to 60 percent, while first grade improved from 42 percent to 56 percent, and second grade from 46 percent to 56 percent. Third grade remained steady at 51 percent. These achievements highlight the success of statewide initiatives and the collective commitment to fostering strong literacy foundations. Moreover, Alaska surpassed the national average in reducing the percentage of students performing well below benchmark.

Alaska Reads Act - District Reading Improvement Plan

The District Reading Improvement Plan (DRIP)/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is the only required component of the Alaska Reads Act (AS 14.30.765). The DRIP/MTSS is a framework for implementing a tiered-level system of support. To ensure students achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade, the DRIP/MTSS requires all schools to provide intensive reading intervention services and formative assessments.

DEED supports district implementation of the DRIP/MTSS through technical assistance, professional development, and resources. This helps districts develop DRIP/MTSS plans aligned to evidence-based

researched instructional practices. All school districts complete and submit their DRIP/MTSS by September 1st, annually. A major component of DRIP/MTSS utilizes assessment results in developing Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIP) for those students scoring well below benchmark on the screening assessment. IRIPs provide customized, evidence-based interventions targeted to improve reading outcomes. Parents actively participate in this process, receiving updates on their child's progress and guidance for supporting reading intervention strategies at home.

The 2023-24 school year was the first implementation year of DRIP/MTSS for districts. In support of this initiative, each district was assigned a DEED Educational Specialist to serve as their primary point of contact. Upon submission, DRIP/MTSS plans were reviewed, and districts received constructive feedback aimed at enhancing their plans and aligning their tiered systems of support with evidence-based practices rooted in the Science of Reading. Throughout the school year, DEED Educational Specialists remained available to address district-specific needs and provide ongoing support.

Alaska Reads Act - Department Reading Program

The Alaska Department Reading Program (DRP), established under the Alaska Reads Act (AS 14.30.770), is a targeted initiative aimed at improving literacy proficiency in Alaska's lowest-performing K-3 schools. The program is voluntary and focuses on the lowest-performing 25 percent of schools statewide, providing them with comprehensive support from department reading specialists. These specialists partner with districts/schools to strengthen District Reading Improvement Plan (DRIP)/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) plans. A primary component of the DRP is the implementation of the Intensive School Reading Improvement Plans (ISRIPs). The ISRIP is specifically designed to address reading challenges identified through detailed data analysis of each participating school. The program spans one year, with the option to apply for a second year to ensure the sustainability of evidence-based practices grounded in the Science of Reading.

DEED established an application and selection process whereas 73 schools across 24 districts were identified as being in the lowest performing 25 percent. Of these, 22 schools within nine districts were approved to participate in the program. Once selected, participating schools received direct support from department reading specialists, who worked closely with district and school leadership to evaluate, implement, and sustain evidence-based literacy practices. Reading specialists guide the implementation of intensive reading intervention services under AS 14.30.765.

Alaska Reads Act – Early Education

Alaska Early Education Program Standards

The Alaska Early Education Program (EEP) 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). The EEP grants support school districts as they work towards implementing EEP Standards. The application for EEP approval and 0.5 Average Daily Membership/Formula Funding (EEP-ADM) identifies districts who have already implemented the EEP Standards. DEED provides technical assistance and guidance regarding the EEP Standards.

Early Education Program Grants

Early Education Program (EEP) Grants support the development or improvement of early education programs operated by school districts. Grantees work towards implementing Alaska EEP Standards by the end of the three-year grant period, resulting in eligibility to count four- and five-year-old preschool students in the average daily membership count for formula funding. DEED posted the first application for the EEP Grant in spring 2023. Eleven districts applied for the FY2024-FY2026 grant cycle and seven districts were awarded funds through a competitive application process. Priority was given to the lowest performing districts based on the System of School Support. In spring of 2024, DEED posted an application for a second cycle of the grant. Nine districts applied for the FY2025-FY2027 grant cycle; funding allowed for two districts to be awarded grants. The total annual allocation in FY2024 was \$2,999,999. There was no increase in allocation for FY2025; \$2,999,999 is being split between nine school districts.

Application for District Early Education Program Approval and 0.5 ADM/Formula Funding

DEED posted the first application for the EEP Approval and 0.5 Average Daily Membership/Formula Funding (EEP-ADM) in May of 2023. Final notification of approval was communicated on September 1, 2023. Seven school districts submitted applications. One applicant, Anchorage School District, received conditional approval. Districts with conditional approval are eligible to report enrolled four- and five-year-old students in the district's average daily membership (ADM) while working towards compliance with all sections of the EEP Standards. Anchorage preschool students received \$1,693,599 through the Foundation Formula for the 2023-2024 school year. The application for EEP-ADM was revised during the fall of 2023 to improve usability; the content and review process did not change. In May of 2024, four school districts submitted applications. Final notification of approval was communicated on August 23, 2024, with Anchorage receiving full approval and two districts receiving conditional approval.

Alaska Reads Act - Virtual Learning Consortium

The Virtual Learning Consortium (VLC), a key component of the Alaska Reads Act (AS 14.30.800), provides virtual education and professional development resources for teachers and students across Alaska. During the 2023-24 school year, the VLC launched a website featuring a professional development course catalog, digital library, virtual services, and student resources. The Course Catalog marked the start of VLC's work, offering educators asynchronous professional development opportunities, some eligible for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and others fulfilling the requirements for AK Reads Act Teacher or Administrator endorsements. In its first year, the VLC published its initial course, **UFLI Foundations**, developed by the University of Florida Literacy Institute and grounded in the Science of Reading, while expanding additional asynchronous courses, the Digital Library, Virtual Services, and Student Resources. By the end of 2024, VLC had over 2,800 enrollments, showcasing its growing impact on Alaskan educators.

Alaska Reads Act - New Data Collection Requirements

The Data Team established a division-wide working group to analyze the Alaska Reads Act and identify new requirements for reporting and data collections. This resulted in adding new data elements to the annual Fall and Summer Online Alaska School Information System (OASIS) data collections, new reporting tables to the annual report to the legislature and including the literacy screener results on the Report Card to the Public.



STRONG POLICY MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN EARLY LITERACY



The Alaska Reads Act, signed into law in 2022 by Governor Mike Dunleavy and co-sponsored by former Senator Tom Begich, is designed to ensure all students can read at grade level by the end of third grade. This landmark legislation seeks to transform early literacy education by incorporating systematic, evidence-based instructional practices rooted in the Science of Reading and rigorous educational and professional teaching standards.

EARLY SCREENING HELPS IDENTIFY READING DIFFICULTIES AS EARLY AS KINDERGARTEN, INFORMING TARGETED INSTRUCTION TO ENSURE STUDENTS ARE ON TRACK TO SUCCEED.



Literacy Screeners
Utilizing standardized tools to assess early reading skills



Curriculum Aligned to Science of Reading
Implementing evidence-based reading instruction methods



K-3 Science of Reading Endorsement
Providing rigorous professional development for educators to deepen their understanding of effective reading instruction



Individual Reading Plans
Developing tailored educational strategies to meet the unique needs of each student

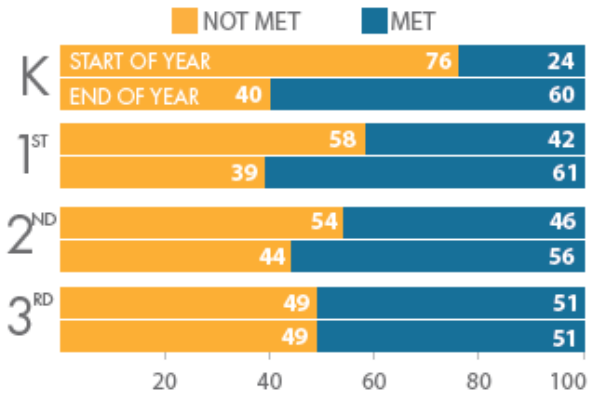


Intensive Tutoring & Summer School Options
Offering additional support and learning opportunities to ensure students meet literacy benchmarks



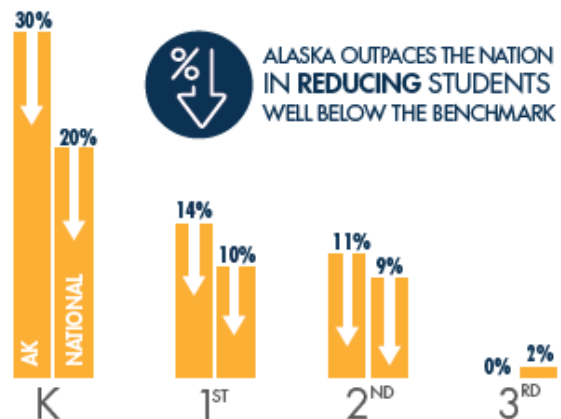
Continuous Parent Communication & Collaboration
Engaging parents in their children's educational progress to foster a supportive learning environment

2023-24 AK GRADE LEVEL SKILL ACHIEVEMENT



**KG INCREASED
STUDENT LEARNING
FROM 24% TO 60%**

2023-24 AK VS. NATIONAL REDUCTION OF AT-RISK STUDENTS



Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Educators Funds used to Support Science of Reading Training

Title II, Part A State funds have provided Science of Reading courses through Keys to Literacy and Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH). Both courses are approved by DEED to meet the requirements outlined in the Alaska Reads Act. The Keys to Literacy professional development course for teachers started in School Year 2022-2023. Since the spring of 2023, more than 1,600 Alaska educators from across 50 districts have participated in Keys to Beginning Reading, a professional development course designed to support the foundational reading skills required by the Alaska Reads Act. This course, offered by Keys to Literacy, is a hybrid-online program that meets the specific reading instruction standards set by the Act. The NWEA professional development course for leaders also started in the spring of 2023. Since that time, 170 leaders representing 40 Alaska school districts have completed a joint learning, collaborating, and coaching opportunity providing participants with fundamental knowledge in effective standards-aligned and research-based reading instruction and assessment practices to support their school and district plans in the Science of Reading as required by the Alaska Reads Act.

School Accountability and Designations

Due to the adoption of new standard setting scores, the data team revised the accountability system for the 2022-23 school year. The changes were presented to stakeholders in a webinar and feedback was collected and considered. The data team added the adopted changes as an addendum to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan and submitted this to U.S. Department of Education. The accountability calculations using the revised system were completed in the spring of 2024.

Alyeska Reading Academy and Institute

The Alyeska Reading Institute (ARI), a division of DEED, was designed to support literacy across the state. From July 2023 to June 2024, ARI worked with 49 districts and 279 schools to implement the Alaska Reads Act, focusing on training, resources, and direct student support. ARI provided professional development to over 600 educators in UFLI Foundations, a program developed by the University of Florida Literacy Institute grounded in the Science of Reading and trained 200 teachers in Hegerty Phonemic Awareness.

Additionally, a statewide session led by Dr. Anita Archer equipped educators with advanced strategies for teaching decoding and foundational skills. To support these efforts, ARI distributed the Amplify mCLASS Intervention kits, licenses for Boost digital reading programs, UFLI Foundations manuals, and other Science of Reading-aligned materials. Additionally, ARI supported the development of Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIP) and provided targeted tutoring for kindergarten through third grade learners scoring well below benchmark as measured by the literacy screening tool.

Through grant funding, ARI enabled districts to offer summer school programs, extending reading support beyond the academic year. By combining training, resources, and interventions, ARI made significant strides in improving literacy outcomes across Alaska, demonstrating a commitment to evidence-based practices and collaboration with educators statewide. Further funding was not allocated for fiscal year 2025.

Alaska's Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant (CLSD)

The federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant (CLSD) was awarded to Alaska in December 2019 and the final year of the five-year grant was to end on September 30, 2024, with an unspent amount of \$3,945,933. In April 2024, DEED applied for and received a No Cost Time Extension (NCTE) year, which allowed time for subgrantees to continue grant goals and spend down all remaining funds. There was no additional funding given this fiscal year for the 2019 CLSD grant.

State activities for the 30 subgrantee districts under this grant included semiannual state-facilitated convenings, both virtual and in-person, as well as regular meetings and office hours with the CLSD Program Manager. Additionally, subgrantees were required to deliver reports through Project Workbooks and participate in opportunities for cohort collaboration to discuss literacy challenges and successes.

Subgrantee projects ranged from a focus on birth to five years old, kindergarten to 5th grade, middle school, high school, and K-12 or whole-school approach. All projects included evidence-based interventions, family and parent engagement and outreach, and look to build sustainability in literacy practices.

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

Highlights

Advancing State-Tribal Public Education Compacting

In January 2024, the SBOE and DEED concluded a pivotal demonstration project for State-Tribal Public Education Compacting as outlined in SB 34 (Chapter 43, SLA 2022). This compacting framework sets a government-to-government agreement between the state and tribal entities to enhance local governance and control over educational initiatives, specifically through the establishment of Tribally Compacted Public Schools (TCPS). This model ensures accountability and adaptability to meet the diverse needs across Alaska, empowering tribes to have a significant role in the educational framework, including the training and certification of teachers who are verified by the department to receive state licenses.

The submitted SB 34 [State Tribal Education Compact Schools Demonstration Report²](#) detailed the necessary policy and statutory amendments required to pilot TCPS in Alaska. It proposed a governance structure that allows Tribes a degree of self-determination necessary to operate within the educational system, while still interfacing within Alaska’s statutory frameworks. Funding mechanisms discussed were aimed to integrate seamlessly with existing formulas, ensuring equitable financial support without requiring local contributions, and establishing a precedent for future tribal compact schools.

Furthermore, the report recommended robust accountability measures including background checks, audits, and assessments under the oversight of the SBOE. The operational blueprint included annual progress reports from Tribes and a corresponding summary from DEED to the legislature, enhancing transparency and continuous improvement in educational outcomes. The outlined approach highlighted a whole systems approach, considering what is best for students and transformational impacts on education through increased tribal involvement.

This initiative represents a significant step towards integrating tribal governance in public education, offering a model for other states with significant Native populations and redefining the role of tribes in shaping educational policies and practices. The next steps include legislative actions to officially pilot and potentially expand this model, aiming to provide a more inclusive and representative educational system in Alaska.

Computer Coding Credential Pathways

Coding in Minecraft is a program designed to teach students coding skills, leading to industry recognized licenses in a range of computer programming areas. This work is closely aligned to DEED’s goals of increasing Career and Technical Education pathways for Alaska students by providing the opportunity for students to graduate from high school with marketable certificates in coding. Forty-three

² https://education.alaska.gov/state_board/december-2023/4.1%202023.12.1%20SBOE%20STEC%20Legislative%20Report%20final%20draft.pdf

(43) Alaska districts have implemented Coding in Minecraft across 422 schools. Each school has 100 student licenses. Currently, 60 teacher licenses and 1,057 student licenses have been distributed across the state. As of December 9, 2024, 121 industry recognized credentials have been awarded to Alaskan students. To support the development of computer science career pathway programs, Artificial intelligence (AI) policies and standards, and implementation of the Coding in Minecraft program, DEED is working to create a new Computer Sciences Content Specialist position. This position will be recruited in January 2025.

Career and Technical Education Grants

DEED provided Career and Technical Education (CTE) grants to school districts, focusing on the development and expansion of CTE programs and work-based learning opportunities. A key element of the grant process was the emphasis on aligning CTE programs with regional workforce needs. The grants facilitated the procurement of necessary equipment, development of Programs of Study, and training for educators. DEED prioritized collaborations among school districts and local industries, tribal entities, and higher education institutions, fostering programs that are responsive to local and regional economic demands. Special consideration was given to rural and remote districts, with a competitive advantage in the grant process to support smaller, underserved CTE programs.

Career and Technical Student Organizations

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are essential to Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Alaska, providing students with leadership opportunities, real-world experiences, and career exploration in diverse fields such as agriculture, business, culinary arts, education, healthcare, and skilled trades. These organizations include Future Farmers of America (FFA), Business Professionals of America (BPA), Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Educators Rising, SkillsUSA, and Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). They extend classroom learning and serve as strategic educational tools that enhance academic motivation and professional development. CTOS offer co-curricular support that develops both soft and technical skills, benefiting students, educators, and the business community by linking education to work-based learning and industry engagement.

DEED actively supports these six CTOS, providing substantial funding and organizational assistance. Each organization receives \$41,500 annually from federal and state sources, aimed at enhancing statewide administration and supporting chapter activities, such as participation in state and national conferences. Additionally, DEED facilitates quarterly meetings and grant distributions to promote effective leadership and ensure program continuity. With a focus on expanding reach, particularly in rural and remote areas, DEED aims to build strong nonprofit foundations for CTOS and enhance connections with national offices to strengthen local chapters.

Career Guidance

DEED partnered with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) to establish career guidance services targeted at remote rural areas. This initiative leveraged the existing infrastructure of regional job centers for the placement of career guides. In preparation for the launch,

project leaders, partners, and career guides participated in professional development sessions in June and July of 2024. Career guidance services began in August 2024. These career guides play a pivotal role in assisting students with navigating post-secondary pathways and planning. They help connect students with opportunities that align with regional workforce development needs and support their career ambitions.

Department Recognition

The Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education (Alaska ACTE) is a professional organization dedicated to ensuring that all Alaskan students have access to quality career and technical education courses through leadership, professional development and advocacy to Alaskan educators who provide these opportunities to students. Each October Alaska ACTE hosts a statewide Professional Development Conference (PDC) for CTE professionals from all over the state. DEED employee Felicia Swanson was among awardees at the Alaska ACTE Conference.

At the October PDC Alaska ACTE presents five statewide CTE Awards. This year, Felicia Swanson of the department's CTE Team earned the CTE Leadership Award for 2024-2025. Felicia has worked with DEED just shy of 26 years; the majority being with CTE. Her favorite part about working with CTE professionals is learning about all the amazing projects CTE teachers are doing with their students.

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

Highlights

Alaska Balanced Assessment 2024 Results and Summary

In January 2024, the SBOE approved the updated standard cut scores for the Alaska System of Academic Readiness (AK STAR), effective retroactive to the Spring 2023 assessment results. This adjustment to the cut scores was the final step in developing Alaska’s Innovative Assessment system, designed to align summative assessment implementation and results to the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth interim assessment administered by all Alaska districts in Fall and Winter. Development of a new system required several years for development, evaluation, and review to create an assessment aligned to Alaska’s unique academic needs. With the new system in place and two years of data to track learning growth and progress over time, DEED is focused on supporting districts in implementing standards aligned to curriculum and effective instruction designed to improve student learning outcomes.

The Spring 2024 administration of the AK STAR English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessments and the Alaska Science Assessment were implemented smoothly. Of students enrolled in grades three through nine, 53,592 completed the ELA assessment and 54,452 completed the math assessment, constituting an 80 percent participation rate. Of students enrolled in grades five, eight, and ten, 21,631 completed the Alaska Science Assessment, constituting an approximately 75 percent participation rate. Statewide results demonstrate that across all grades, 31.9 percent of students are proficient in ELA, 31.1 percent of students are proficient in math, and 37 percent of students are proficient in science. DEED released statewide results on August 30 and has provided training opportunities to districts on interpretation of assessment results and use of data to guide district decisions. The 2024 Assessment Brief can be found on the [DEED Assessment Results³](https://education.alaska.gov/akassessments/AKAssessment_Brief_2024.pdf) website.

Head Start

DEED receives an annual \$125,000 federal grant to establish a Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO) to facilitate partnerships among Head Start programs and other state, non-profit, and tribal entities to benefit low-income children & families. HSCO facilitated professional development, provided monthly trainings, and on-going support for Head Start, school district, and childcare programs utilizing the Statewide Child Assessment Tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD. HSCO worked with University of Alaska Anchorage, Department of Health, Thread, All Alaska Pediatric Partnership, and other partners to ensure programs are able to get federally mandated background checks, have access to supports for workforce recruitment and retention, and ensure safe and healthy environments for children and staff.

The 17 Head Start programs received \$8,335,000 in State funding in FY2024. They also received \$69,138,030 in federal funding. Head Start employed 1,147 staff, which includes 143 preschool

³ https://education.alaska.gov/akassessments/AKAssessment_Brief_2024.pdf

classroom teachers, 190 preschool teacher assistants, 109 infant-toddler classroom teachers, and 44 home visitors. Head Start programs served 2,669 children in center-based classrooms and 481 through home-based programs. Head Start served 2,771 families. Of those families, 2,507 were employed or in school.

Pre-Kindergarten Grants

The legislature appropriated \$5,700,000 for Pre-Kindergarten grants in the 2023-2024 school year. Of this total, \$2,500,000 was in the category of “one-time funds.” This funding was awarded through two different grants: the Pre-Elementary Grant (PEG) and the Early Learning Coordination Grant (ELC). The PEG was allocated \$2,500,000 and the ELC \$3,200,000.

Pre-Elementary Grant (PEG)

All school districts are eligible to apply for a PEG when there is an open application. Applications are posted every three-years. The most recent PEG application was posted in Spring 2023, with the grant period falling between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2026. Applications were reviewed by a team of education specialists at DEED. Applications that earned more than 60 percent of possible points were approved. An equitable formula was used to distribute the money across the nine applicants who met the criteria.

Awardees may use their PEG funding to provide a pre-elementary program to children three through five years of age. Five-year olds who attend the program are those who have not yet started kindergarten. The program may be classroom or home-based. It must be in alignment with Alaska’s Early Learning Guidelines, annually receive a Pre-Elementary Approval to Operate certificate, and use Teaching Strategies GOLD for their on-going assessment of student progress.

The nine school districts awarded a Pre-Elementary Grant for the next three years are: Aleutians East Borough, Bristol Bay Borough, Chugach, Juneau Borough, Kodiak Island Borough, Lake and Peninsula Borough, Nome, Southwest Region, and Yukon-Koyukuk. Most programs are classroom-based. One program with Southwest Region School District collaborates with community programs and share space and staff. Another program with Chugach School District has classroom-based and homeschool preschool programming.

Early Learning Coordination Grants (ELC)

Early Learning Coordination Grants were awarded to school districts who applied for DEED’s Pre-Elementary Grant or Early Education Program Grant and were not awarded either grant. The funds were distributed with the understanding they were for the 2023-2024 school year only.

Grantees provided pre-kindergarten funding for students three to five years of age. Programming was provided in the classroom environment. Some classrooms had only preschool-aged students and others were multi-grade, including pre-kindergarten and at least one grade higher (e.g. kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, etc.). The seven school districts who received an ELC Grant are: Alaska Gateway, Chatham,

Dillingham City, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Northwest Arctic Borough, Petersburg City, and Southeast Island.

School Improvement

Cross-team collaboration

The School Improvement Team collaborated with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Team, Academic Support Team, Health and Safety Team, Data Team, and Assessments Team to bring a unified and streamlined approach to district and school support, aligning needs assessments, plans and goals, and state personnel support in different areas of need and requirement.

Program Support

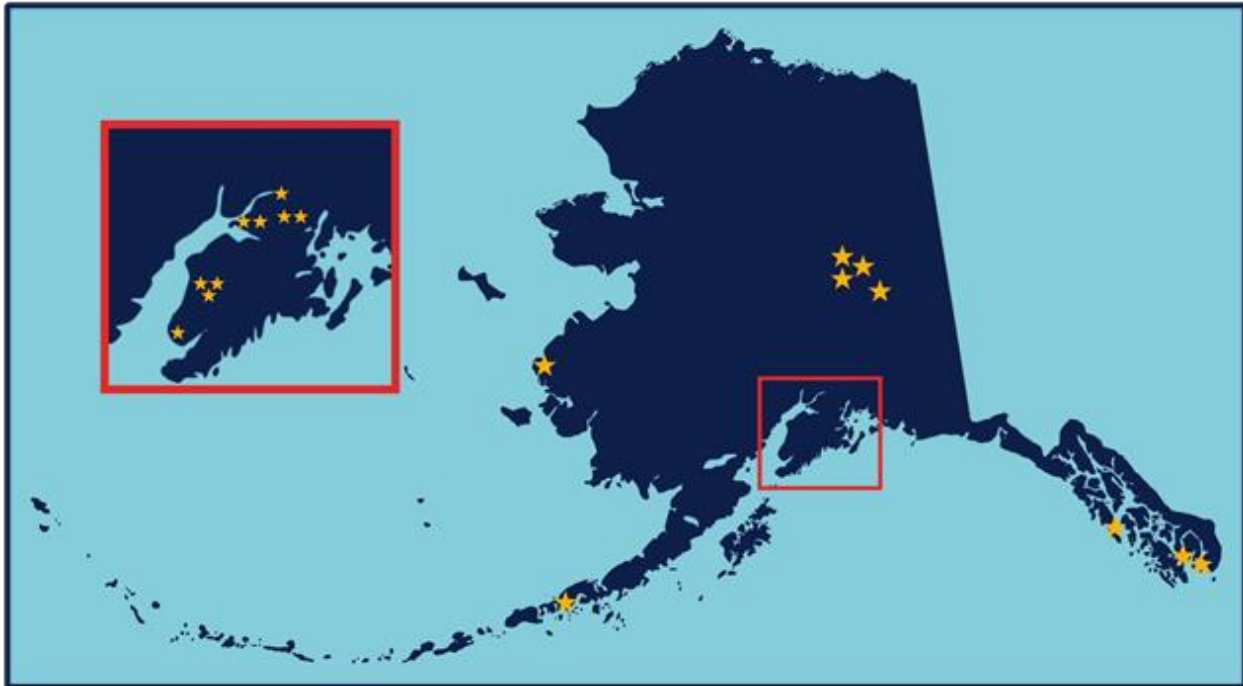
Three years into the statewide rollout of the Empowerment Process for School Improvement, DEED moved from contracting positions of support (Empowerment Specialists) through a grant with Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC) to hiring positions in the State. FY2024 was a hybrid year, with seven contracted positions and two DEED-hired positions. The contracted positions ended May 31, 2024, and the program moved, as planned, to fully DEED run and supported.

Delay in Designation

Due to the adoption of the new standard cut scores and a needed revision of the accountability system for the 2022-2023 school year, the designation of new Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools was delayed, with districts receiving notice of designations in May of 2024. This led to an adjustment of the support process and expectations of the timeline for plan completion while retaining federal compliance.

Alaska Social Studies Standards

In Spring 2023, DEED launched a comprehensive Social Studies Standards update. It commenced with convening key partner organizations to weigh in on the overarching goals that would drive the Alaska educator writing process. DEED contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR), national experts in Social Studies Standards and curriculum, to facilitate a series of strategic planning sessions with civic, education, tribal, and policy organization representatives from around the state to create Guiding Principles for Alaska’s Social Studies Standards.



Alaska Educator Working Group Statewide Distribution

From June 2023 to October 2023, a writing committee of 18 Alaska Social Studies educators from across the State developed new Alaska standards aligned to the defined Guiding Principles and informed by national frameworks and standards. The standards were reviewed by the Guiding Principles working groups, a reflective “friend’s feedback” group, and a policy committee comprised of policy leaders and legislators across relevant sectors. After incorporating feedback and refining the standards, the writing committee submitted a final draft of standards to DEED in November of 2023.

After passing through the legal review and regulatory preparation process, the updated Alaska Social Studies Standards were presented to the SBOE in October 2024 and posted for public comment during the month of November. On December 5, 2024, the Social Studies Standards were adopted by the SBOE.

DEED has developed trainings, tools, and implementation resources with AIR as a toolkit to support districts in implementing the new standards. DEED also hired an English Language Arts and Social Studies Content Specialist in June 2024; this new staff member will support districts in the roll out and

implementation of the new standards. The updated standards are now available on the DEED [Academic Standards⁴](#) website.

American Rescue Plan- Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY)

Remaining American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) State funds were utilized for the second annual State Homeless Conference to continue building the capacity within our state and districts to better support students experiencing homelessness in Alaska. The conference hosted by DEED, in partnership with SchoolHouse Connection (a national non-profit organization working to overcome homelessness through education), provided districts with McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth training, technical assistance, support, and relationship building. Every district received an invitation to the conference and grants were offered to assist with travel. The conference was well attended and received positive feedback from participants.

Purple Star Schools Program

The Purple Star School program is designed to support the unique needs of military-connected children and ensure their academic and social-emotional success. This initiative equips schools to provide comprehensive support for military families. By centralizing resources, building stakeholder networks, and cultivating cultural competency, Purple Star Schools create a nurturing environment where military-connected children can thrive. There are currently 39 Purple Star Schools located in five districts as well as one private school.

Data Warehouse and Data Dashboard Project

DEED is developing an Operational Data Warehouse (ODW) to modernize the management of educational data across the state. This project will unify historical and current data within a singular, accessible framework, enhancing reporting capabilities through advanced dashboards that display and predict longitudinal data trends. The initiative aims to streamline access for all education stakeholders covering key topics such as student achievement, fiscal operations, and initiatives like Teacher Retention and Recruitment.

Highlighting the potential of the ODW, [a proof-of-concept \(PoC\)⁵](#) dashboard was developed to visually present educational data in a longitudinal format. Simultaneously, DEED has begun building the necessary infrastructure within the Azure cloud environment to support this transition. These technological upgrades are accompanied by comprehensive training and capacity-building for DEED staff. This will ensure they are equipped to manage and sustain the new systems effectively, eliminating the need for long-term contracted services to maintain the data warehouse and data dashboards.

⁴ <https://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/Adopted-AK-SS-Standards-2024.pdf>

⁵ <https://education.alaska.gov/edudata-overview>

National Recognition

Donald Enoch Receives the Melody Musgrove Heritage Award

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) presented the Melody Musgrove Heritage Award to Donald Enoch, Special Education Administrator II. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated prolonged service and made substantive contributions to NASDSE, as well as to the field of special education.

The NASDSE Heritage Award is available only to current state directors and previous NASDSE board members. In order to qualify for the service component of this award, the candidate must have served NASDSE for an extended period of time. The award requires that the candidate either engage in one notable achievement or in a series of smaller ongoing achievements that, when combined, transform into a larger substantive contribution.

Donald has been with DEED since 2008. He was also honored as the senior, longest serving Special Education Director for the nation. His enduring dedication to fostering inclusive learning environments that serve the diverse needs of students remains unwavering.

National Charter School Recognition

Alaska's performance in the first-ever state ranking of charter student performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was particularly noteworthy. The state led the rankings, demonstrating exceptional achievement levels in both reading and math among its charter schools. Specifically, Alaska's charter school students scored 32.1 percent of a standard deviation above the national average for charter schools, an achievement equated to more than one full year of learning compared to peers. This impressive performance underscores the effectiveness of Alaska's charter schools, highlighting their ability to deliver superior educational outcomes. The state's charter schools have shown that with the right policies and support, they can serve as exemplary models of success in addressing educational challenges and meeting diverse student needs. To learn more about Alaska's remarkable charter school achievements, refer to [The Nation's Charter Report Card](#)⁶ and [What We're Watching: Paul E. Peterson on Alaska's Charter Schools](#)⁷.

DEED Featured in National Conferences

Alaska's School Improvement Program

Alaska's School Improvement Program was featured at the National Comprehensive Center's Meeting the Moment® (MtM) Conference in Washington, D.C., in March of 2024. The Alaska School Improvement Team was invited to share their statewide approach to school improvement, which centers on culture, context, and stakeholder engagement while developing plans based on root-cause analysis

⁶ <https://www.educationnext.org/nations-charter-report-card-first-ever-state-ranking-charter-student-performance-naep/>

⁷ <https://www.educationnext.org/what-were-watching-paul-e-peterson-on-alaskas-charter-schools/>

and leveraging assets. The team presented to a full room and later facilitated table discussions, allowing attendees to ask detailed questions and explore the Empowerment Playbook, a comprehensive guide for schools involved in the improvement process.

The Meeting the Moment® conference focused on how state leaders are using innovation to make an impact and was a national event hosted by the National Comprehensive Center in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education. The conference, attended by over 300 registrants, marked the first Comprehensive Center Network (CCNetwork) event dedicated to celebrating the achievements and impact of the network. It provided a valuable opportunity for State Education Agency (SEA) teams to engage in networking and shared learning. The conference discussions emphasized the importance of equitably serving all students, and participants came from a wide range of regions across the country, including members from outlying jurisdictions who were visiting the continental United States for the first time.

Priority Four: Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.

Highlights

Teacher Retention and Recruitment (TRR) Initiative

The Alaska Teacher Retention and Recruitment (TRR) initiative, established by the Governor's Office of Alaska (GOA) in 2020, aims to address persistent issues of teacher turnover and shortages. In August 2023, the TRR working group released the TRR Playbook, which outlines practical, professional, and policy recommendations to enhance teacher retention and recruitment across the state. The Playbook serves as a comprehensive guide, providing detailed implementation strategies and recommendations tailored for various stakeholder groups. The SBOE directed DEED to implement several of the playbook recommendations and share the TRR Playbook widely with other stakeholder groups.

Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program

In January 2023, the SBOE authorized DEED to develop a DEED sponsored Teacher-Registered Apprenticeship Program (T-RAP). This "earn as you learn" model targets school employees, offering them pathways to become fully certified Alaskan educators without leaving their communities. The development of the program's framework was a collaborative effort that involved extensive stakeholder feedback, with a specific focus on cultural competencies and high-quality mentorship. DEED worked in partnership with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) on their application for the State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) Competitive Grant from the United States Department of Labor. DOLWD was awarded the grant. A dedicated portion of SAEF funds will be used to support apprenticeship tuition and related costs. DEED sponsored T-RAP received official approval in December 2024. Initiatives for 2025 include implementation of the T-RAP model and development of a Principal-Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Modernization of Teacher Certification System

Significant progress was made in 2024 with the transition to a fully integrated online teacher certification system, expected to be fully functional in 2025. This modernization simplifies certification processes, integrating applications, payments, and communications into a streamlined platform. The new system includes a district interface that allows Alaska school districts to efficiently access certification data for their staff, coupled with customizable reporting features. The teacher certification website was updated to enhance navigation, improving accessibility for current and prospective educators.

Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center

In September 2024, DEED entered into a contract with the Alaska Council of School Administrators to establish the Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center (AERRC). This central organization leads the statewide efforts to enhance teacher retention and recruitment. A steering committee, comprising a broad spectrum of stakeholders, plays a crucial role in this process, providing guidance on the implementation of the TRR Playbook's recommendations. This committee helps ensure that the strategies developed align with local needs and support sustainable practices across the state. AERRC will host two annual professional development conferences focused on Retention and Recruitment best practices, and provide direct recruitment support, including expertise in navigating international hiring processes.

TRR Awareness and Engagement Campaign

DEED and TRR Working Group Leaders organized a series of outreach activities, including presentations and work sessions that engaged key stakeholder groups through education association conferences, community meetings, and partner organization gatherings. The first annual Teacher Retention and Recruitment Convening, co-hosted with the University of Alaska, Fairbanks K-12 Outreach program, was held in conjunction with the annual Alaska Teacher and Personnel (AT&P) Job Fair. This event provided a platform to discuss, share, and strategize on recruitment and retention strategies, marking a significant effort to enhance the campaign's effectiveness.

National Recognition

Teacher of the Year 2024

In January 2024, Catherine Walker, a distinguished educator from Anchorage, Alaska, was named one of the four finalists for the National Teacher of the Year, an honor announced by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Mrs. Walker, who teaches oceanography, marine biology, unmanned aviation science, and engineering essentials at Dimond High School, distinguished herself among fifty-six state finalists through multiple interview rounds in Washington, D.C. Her credentials include being a National Board-Certified Teacher with a broad teaching portfolio that spans science and career and technical education classes since 2006. This achievement marks the second consecutive year that an Alaska State Teacher of the Year has reached the final round of this rigorous national selection process, underscoring the exceptional quality of education professionals in the state.

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

Highlights

Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports

DEED has been actively expanding its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) project over the last three school years, introducing two cohorts aimed at fostering safe, respectful, and engaging school environments. In FY2024, the department enhanced this initiative by integrating Transforming Schools Trauma-Engaged Practices into the PBIS framework, aligning with Alaska Education’s Challenge Priority 5, which emphasizes the need for safe and healthy school settings.

Initially, the PBIS project encompassed nine districts with 17 schools, significantly impacting several thousand students and staff members. By the third year, the project expanded to include a total of 13 districts encompassing 35 schools, with plans for further expansion by Fall 2025. This initiative is supported through a collaboration with the NWPBIS Network, which provides monthly training and coaching to staff, ensuring the continuous development of positive behavior and school culture. This systematic approach is designed to achieve lasting changes in school environments, making them more supportive and conducive to student learning, as well as enhancing the well-being of both students and staff.

Safety and Well Being Summit

In September 2024, DEED brought together 477 educational leaders, key staff, and strategic stakeholders from 38 of Alaska’s 53 school districts for a summit aimed at enhancing school safety and well-being. This assembly focused on improving the safety and well-being of students through collaborative efforts with families, communities, and tribes. The overarching goal was to foster environments where children can thrive, as research underscores the link between student safety, well-being, and academic success. The summit served as a platform to share methods and tools for promoting healthy student development and improving school safety infrastructure. Participants engaged in discussions on a wide range of topics such as educator wellness, culturally responsive practices, threat assessment, positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), suicide prevention, mental health, social-emotional learning, and the implementation of the Alaska Safe Children’s Act. The gathering highlighted the importance of community support and the role of comprehensive safety and wellness policies in fostering more successful educational outcomes.

Suicide Awareness Prevention

The Suicide Awareness, Prevention, & Postvention (SAPP) funding is provided to DEED through a partnership with the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (SSPC). The funding provided through SSPC is the primary funding source for suicide and trauma work accomplished through DEED. This work has reached all our Alaskan school districts in some form. DEED currently has over 29,000 users of online eLearning professional development courses intended to support Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and Postvention programming and are free to all Alaskans to access. SSPC funding also supports professional development, personnel, and administrative costs at DEED to implement Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and Postvention programs.

This year, the SAPP Competitive grant program awarded eight grants to school districts across the state, enabling them to adopt and enhance programs focused on evidence-based practices and Trauma-Engaged Schools. These grants are integral to implementing strategies aligned with the State Suicide Prevention Plan Goals and Strategies. Additionally, DEED encourages the formation of Threat Assessment Teams within schools to identify and assist individuals at risk. This initiative stresses the importance of safe and healthy educational environments. Such programs not only address the needs of children who have experienced significant hardships but also aim to improve the overall safety and well-being of students and staff, thereby fostering a conducive atmosphere for successful learning and personal development.

DEED featured in National Conferences

The Health & Safety team has been invited to present at three national conferences, where they shared Alaska's innovative approaches to trauma-engaged practices in schools. At the National Association for Positive Behavior Support (NWPBIS) conference in Tacoma, WA, in April 2024, the team presented on "Embedding Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) into the Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska," highlighting the state's framework for addressing the trauma faced by students and adults. The session focused on how PBIS tools are being utilized across communities to support this important work. Additionally, the team presented at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Project AWARE grantee meeting on "Transforming Schools: A Framework for Trauma-Engaged Practice in Alaska," emphasizing the role of trauma-informed practices in schools. Finally, at the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) annual grantee meeting with the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE), the team participated in a panel discussion on integrating school-based mental health supports. The session aimed to provide practical tools for aligning mental health policies, training school-based mental health practitioners, and applying evidence-based practices for trauma-informed care.

District and Student Demographic and Achievement Data

The 2023-2024 school year marked the first full year of the administration of a literacy screener for all students in kindergarten through grade three. On all charts, Beginning of Year, Middle of Year, and End of Year data for each achievement level and a comparison to the national rate are provided for reference.

**Statewide Literacy Screener Proficiency Rates 2023-20204
All Grades Benchmark**

	Above	Above	Above	At	At	At	Below	Below	Below	Well Below	Well Below	Well Below
	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate
Beginning of Year	4,984	18.89	23	5,732	21.72	26	4,489	17.01	17	11,186	42.39	34
Middle of Year	4,851	18.99	24	6,354	24.87	28	4,132	16.17	16	10,210	39.97	32
End of Year	7,660	30.16	36	6,867	27.04	28	3,697	14.56	13	7,175	28.25	23

**Statewide mCLASS Literacy Screener Proficiency Rates 2023-2024
Kindergarten Benchmark**

	Above	Above	Above	At	At	At	Below	Below	Below	Well Below	Well Below	Well Below
	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate
Beginning of Year	721	11.47	21	758	12.06	17	1,202	19.12	20	3,606	57.36	42
Middle of Year	1,055	17.1	25	1,368	22.17	26	969	15.7	17	2,779	45.03	32
End of Year	1,874	30.56	37	1,846	30.1	31	773	12.6	11	1,640	26.74	21

**Statewide mCLASS Literacy Screener Proficiency Rates 2023-2024
First Grade Benchmark**

	Above		Above	At		At	Below		Below	Below	Well Below	Well Below	Well Below
	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	
Beginning of Year	1,114	16.83	22	1,631	24.64	28	1,265	19.11	19	2,609	39.42	31	
Middle of Year	1,039	16.01	23	1,647	25.38	29	1,252	19.29	16	2,551	39.31	32	
End of Year	1,988	30.75	38	1,964	30.38	29	922	14.26	13	1,591	24.61	20	

**Statewide mCLASS Literacy Screener Proficiency Rates 2023-2024
Second Grade Benchmark**

	Above		Above	At		At	Below		Below	Below	Well Below	Well Below	Well Below
	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	
Beginning of Year	1,438	21.17	24	1,670	24.58	29	976	14.37	14	2,709	39.88	33	
Middle of Year	1,412	21.11	26	1,759	26.3	28	1,016	15.19	15	2,502	37.4	31	
End of Year	1,813	27.06	33	1,930	28.81	29	1,021	15.24	14	1,935	28.88	24	

**Statewide mCLASS Literacy Screener Proficiency Rates 2023-2024
Third Grade Benchmark**

	Above		Above	At		At	Below		Below	Below	Well Below	Well Below	Well Below
	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	Alaska Count	Alaska Percent	National Rate	
Beginning of Year	1,711	25.57	25	1,673	25	29	1,046	15.63	17	2,262	33.8	29	
Middle of Year	1,345	21.7	23	1,580	25.49	29	895	14.44	15	2,378	38.37	33	
End of Year	1,985	32.53	36	1,127	18.47	21	981	16.08	15	2,009	32.92	28	

Alternate Literacy Screener Participation

Three school districts administered an alternate literacy screener during the 2023-2024 school. These districts include Bering Strait School District, Lower Kuskokwim School District, and Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. Each of these districts submitted a waiver to the department requesting to use an alternate screener that met all the criteria outlined in the Alaska Reads Act. The following data provides information on how many students participated in alternate assessments statewide at the Beginning of the Year (BOY), Middle of the Year (MOY) and at the End of the Year (EOY).

Statewide Alternate Literacy Screener Use 2023-2024

	BOY		MOY		EOY	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
KG	1,467	22.95	1,469	23.18	1,513	23.45
1	1,580	24.72	1,542	24.33	1,572	24.36
2	1,697	26.55	1,677	26.46	1,705	26.42
3	1,647	25.77	1,649	26.02	1,663	25.77
Total	6,391	99.99	6337	99.99	6,453	100

National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)

Every two years the U.S. Department of Education, through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), tests large samples of 4th-graders and 8th-graders in each state (plus the District of Columbia and Department of Defense schools) in reading and mathematics. As NAEP was not administered in 2023, there were no results released in 2024. The most recent administration of NAEP occurred in Spring of 2024, and results will be released Wednesday, January 29, 2025. Results will be available on the [DEED Assessment](#)⁸ website. Education Next issued a report published two articles regarding the first-ever ranking of charter student performance on NAEP: [The Nation’s Charter Report Card](#)⁹, [What We’re Watching: Paul E. Peterson on Alaska’s Charter Schools](#)¹⁰.

⁸ <https://education.alaska.gov/assessments/naep>

⁹ <https://www.educationnext.org/nations-charter-report-card-first-ever-state-ranking-charter-student-performance-naep/>

¹⁰ <https://www.educationnext.org/what-were-watching-paul-e-peterson-on-alaskas-charter-schools/>

School and Student Data

Graduation and Dropout Rates

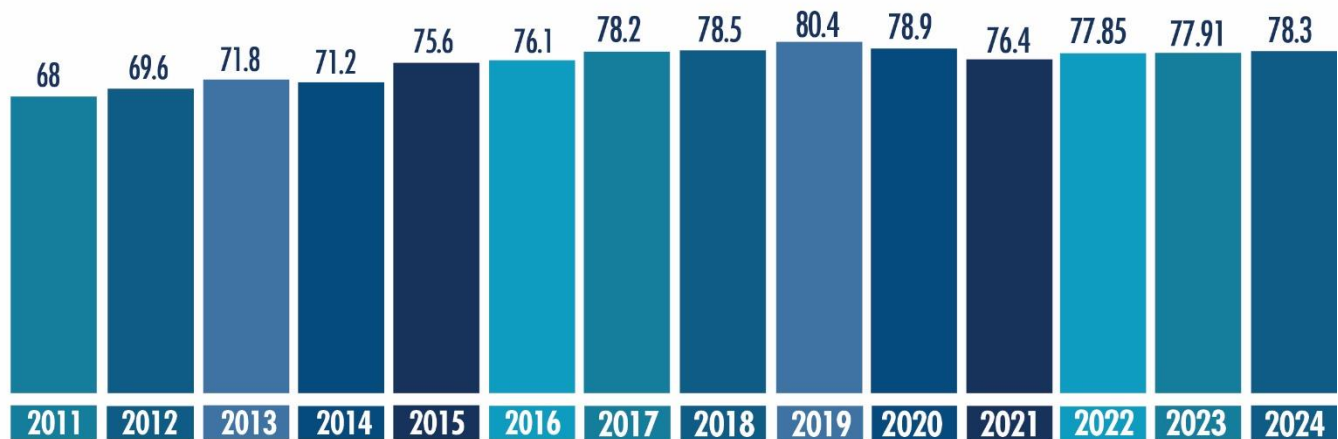
All states are federally required to report a four-year graduation rate for cohorts of students. Alaska has reported these data since the 2010-2011 school year. A student who entered ninth grade in the 2015-2016 school year would be a member of the 2019 cohort. Cohort groups include students who transfer into an Alaska public school.

The graduation rate is calculated as the number of graduates in the cohort who receive a regular diploma by June 30, divided by the number of all students assigned to the cohort. A graduate is defined as a student who has received a regular diploma from a state or district approved education program; this does not include a student who receives a certificate of achievement or Alternative High School Diploma, also known as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

Graduate count is the number of students who graduated with a regular diploma during the school year (July 1-June 30). This count includes all students who graduate during the school year, regardless of cohort year.

STATEWIDE FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE

% BY CALENDAR YEAR



Methodology: All 50 states must report a graduation rate using the Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Method. This calculation has been in place in Alaska since the 2010-2011 school year. Graduation rates since the 2010-2011 school year cannot be compared to rates prior to the 2010-2011 school year.

Dropout rates are calculated by taking the total number of students in grades 7-12 who drop out of public school during the school year and dividing by the October 1 enrollment count for all students in grades 7-12.

A student is not considered a dropout if his or her departure was due to the completion of a state- or district-approved education program; transfer to a public school, private school, or state- or district-approved education program; temporary absence caused by suspension, illness, or medical condition; or

death. A student in pursuit of a General Educational Development (GED) certificate is considered a dropout, as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics. A student who drops out multiple times during a school year is only counted once in the dropout rate numerator.

School Year	Dropouts	Enrollment	Dropout Rate %
2010-2011	2,779	59,372	4.68
2011-2012	2,830	58,890	4.81
2012-2013	2,364	58,529	4.04
2013-2014	2,303	58,099	3.96
2014-2015	2,141	58,071	3.69
2015-2016	2,268	57,949	3.91
2016-2017	2,003	57,971	3.46
2017-2018	1,784	57,879	3.08
2018-2019	1,730	57,570	3.01
2019-2020	1,590	57,869	2.75
2020-2021	1,806	57,987	3.11
2021-2022	2,164	58,731	3.68
2022-2023	2,101	59,140	3.55
2023-2024	2,115	59,425	3.56

Note: The inverse of the graduation rate is not the dropout rate.

Teacher/Student/Administrator Ratios Statewide 2023-2024

The following chart provides information regarding the ratio between students, teachers, and administrators. As part of the Alaska Reads Act, DEED is required to calculate ratios between students and teachers, teachers and administrators, and students and administrators. The following table provides district wide information as well as statewide numbers. Please note that some districts have a very high teacher to student ratio that stems from the presence of a correspondence program. For example, Galena School District and Yukon-Koyukuk School District both have large numbers of correspondence school students.

District Name	Total Teacher Count	Total Teacher FTE	Total Administrative Staff FTE	Total Student KG-12	Total Student PK-12	Student/Teacher Ratio	Student/Administrative Staff Ratio	Administrative Staff/Teacher Ratio
Alaska Gateway	34	30.06	3.8	345	369	12.28	97.11	0.3
Aleutian Region	1	1	0	10	12	12		0
Aleutian Region	1	1	0.46	10	12	12	26.09	1
Aleutians East	24	24	3	188	205	8.54	68.33	0.13
Anchorage	2,436	2,416.09	154.49	42,431	43,370	17.95	280.73	0.06
Annette Island	32	31.75	3.6	296	314	9.89	87.22	0.13
Bering Strait	177	177	23	1655	1,783	10.07	77.52	0.13
Bristol Bay	12	12	2	106	118	9.83	59	0.17
Chatham	22	20.25	2.75	156	163	8.05	59.27	0.15
Chugach	18	17.05	0.2	589	635	37.24	3175	0.06
Craig	28	27.45	3.55	694	696	25.36	196.06	0.15
Delta/Greely	50	49.49	4	982	1,006	20.33	251.5	0.08
Denali	28	25.47	1.86	890	924	36.28	496.77	0.16
Dillingham	31	61.2	10	398	403	6.58	40.3	0.08
Fairbanks	666	656.64	46	12,365	12,541	19.1	272.63	0.07
Galena	94	92.9	9	7,478	7,768	83.62	863.11	0.1
Haines	20	20	3	269	272	13.6	90.67	0.15
Hoonah	15	13.48	2	106	113	8.38	56.5	0.15
Hoonah	15	13.48	2	106	113	8.38	56.5	0.15
Hydaburg	8	7.4	2	107	116	15.68	58	0.27

District Name	Total Teacher Count	Total Teacher FTE	Total Administrative Staff FTE	Total Student KG-12	Total Student PK-12	Student/Teacher Ratio	Student/Administrative Staff Ratio	Administrative Staff/Teacher Ratio
Iditarod	19	17.74	1	312	324	18.26	324	0.06
Juneau	272	259.12	17.03	4082	4,265	16.46	250.44	0.07
Kake	14	12.8	1	107	107	8.36	107	0.08
Kashunamiut	29	29	2	310	328	11.31	164	0.07
Kenai Peninsula	547	533.71	41.2	8,368	8,499	15.92	206.29	0.09
Ketchikan	165	165	13	2,010	2,051	12.43	157.77	0.08
Klawock	15	14.08	2	131	133	9.45	66.5	0.14
Kodiak Island	156	155	12	2,093	2,162	13.95	180.17	0.08
Kuspuk	31	31	3.8	308	325	10.48	85.53	0.13
Lake and Peninsula	40	38.75	7.25	302	332	8.57	45.79	0.21
Lower Kuskokwim	236	235.3	35.25	3,753	3,917	16.65	111.12	0.16
Lower Yukon	121	120.2	20.8	1,949	2,045	17.01	98.32	0.17
Mat-Su	1,052	1,028.87	75.15	19,271	19,431	18.89	258.56	0.07
Mt Edgecumbe	27	26.5	5	401	401	15.13	80.2	0.19
Nenana	27	25.77	3	2,084	2,167	84.09	722.33	0.12
Nome	48	45.83	6	698	710	15.49	118.33	0.13
North Slope	172	172	14.5	1,792	1,969	11.45	135.79	0.09
Northwest Arctic	106	105.5	17.75	1,888	2,009	19.04	113.18	0.17
Pelican	2	2	1	15	15	7.5	15	0.5
Petersburg	42	38.4	3	467	476	12.4	158.67	0.08
Pribilof	6	5.1	0.9	52	58	11.37	64.44	0.2
Saint Mary's	13	12.28	1.8	179	191	15.55	106.11	0.16
Sitka	96	92.8	8	1,132	1,143	12.32	142.88	0.09
Skagway	14	14	1	139	145	10.36	145	0.07
Southeast Island	19	18.9	2.71	174	194	10.26	71.59	0.16
Southwest Region	50	47.09	7.36	572	627	13.31	85.19	0.21
Tanana	3	3	2	32	32	10.67	16	0.67

District Name	Total Teacher Count	Total Teacher FTE	Total Administrative Staff FTE	Total Student KG-12	Total Student PK-12	Student/Teacher Ratio	Student/Administrative Staff Ratio	Administrative Staff/Teacher Ratio
Unalaska	28	28	3	348	352	12.57	117.33	0.11
Valdez	51	49.99	3	565	573	11.46	191	0.06
Wrangell	23	21.18	3	261	271	12.8	90.33	0.14
Yakutat	6	6	1	106	106	17.67	106	0.17
Yukon Flats	24	23.5	1.9	181	187	7.96	98.42	0.09
Yukon-Koyukuk	73	70.85	7.85	3,496	3,620	51.09	461.15	0.14
Yupitit	37	36.12	3.25	506	506	14.01	155.69	0.11
State	7,315	7,221.23	610.29	127,928	131,264	18.18	215.08	0.09

1. This report is based on unaudited survey data collected in October 2023
2. FTE = Full Time Equivalent
3. Student/Teacher Ratio is calculated by dividing the PK-12 Student Count by the Unduplicated Teacher FTE
4. N/A indicates no teacher data
5. A certified staff member may have multiple teacher job types (e.g. Teacher and SPED Teacher), and a teacher may have assignments in multiple schools within the same district.
Therefore, the individual counts of teachers at a school by job type may not sum to the Total Teacher Count. Also, the individual school-level counts of teachers within a job type may not sum to the district total or the statewide total.
6. The student enrollment counts are based on enrollment on October 1 in a particular school.
7. The district and state level student enrollment counts may contain duplicate students.
8. Data as of 02/14/2024

Other Department Functions & Services

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education

Established by the Legislature in 1974 and funded by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation (ASLC), the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) provides sustainable solutions for college, career, and technical training. Governed by a fourteen-member Commission representing Alaska's educational entities and the public, ACPE develops and administers policies to enhance awareness and access to financial resources for higher education and training.

In FY2024, ACPE achieved significant milestones, including supporting legislative updates to the Alaska Performance Scholarship (HB 148), which expanded curriculum options, removed test score requirements, and increased award amounts for the Class of 2024 onward. The organization implemented education loan program updates, raising loan limits, introducing an Immediate Repayment Loan option, and offering competitive rates below federal levels. Additionally, ACPE launched a new strategic plan, updated its mission, vision, and branding, and enhanced its website. Leading efforts to boost FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion, ACPE delivered resources to modernize the FAFSA platform and support Alaskans in accessing federal and state financial aid, reinforcing its commitment to increasing educational opportunities.

Alaska State Council on the Arts

The Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA), an independent corporation within DEED, supports arts and culture in Alaska's schools and communities through grants and programs. In FY2024, ASCA awarded 185 grants totaling \$1,496,242, nearing pre-pandemic levels. A highlight was the unveiling of the winning Alaska Artistic License Plate design, *Fireweed and Denali* by Sabrina Kessakorn, at the Alaska State Fair, with over 28,000 public votes selecting the design and a \$3 fee per plate effective August 2024. ASCA's Silver Hand Program experienced steady growth in permit sales through expanded outreach to tribes, businesses, and tourism partners.

The Munartet Project, now in its eighth year of a 10-year partnership with Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, continued its work in Kodiak to support teacher recruitment and retention through arts and culture education, focusing on sustainability as the program nears completion. ASCA partnered with the Alaska Arts Education Consortium on the Alaska Arts Education Data Project, supported by a National Endowment for the Arts Collective Impact grant, with ASCA providing matching funds. Additionally, ASCA advanced the Alaska Cultural Trust, now in its third year, in collaboration with the Alaska Arts and Culture Foundation, establishing a fund to support and sustain Alaska's artistic and cultural heritage without supplanting public funding.

Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums

The Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums (LAM) collects, preserves, and shares Alaska's historical and cultural resources to promote lifelong learning for all Alaskans. It provides library and information services to state agencies and the legislature, supports local libraries, archives, and museums in developing programs, operates state museums for Alaskans and the tourism industry, manages state records, and preserves public records of permanent value.

LAM offers a range of services benefiting K-12 and postsecondary students. These include the Sheldon Jackson Museum's Hands-On Loan program, which provides over 600 educational objects to schools statewide; the Alaska Summer Reading Program, which supports public libraries with training and materials; and Live Homework Help, an online tutoring service for K-12 and introductory college students. Additionally, Alaska's Digital Archives makes over 100,000 historical resources available for research, while Alaska's Online with Libraries (OWL) program ensures public libraries have high-speed internet and Zoom capabilities for educational activities. Students benefit from hands-on learning opportunities during school visits to the Alaska State Library, Archives, and Museums in Juneau and Sitka.

Information Technology Function

The DEED Information Technology (IT) section provides strategic planning, systems management, technology support, and solutions development for various divisions, including Innovation and Education Excellence, Administrative Services, School Finance, and the Commissioner's Office, while offering support to other divisions as needed. Led by an IT Manager, the team includes systems/network technicians, programmers, a web/media specialist, and a state Technology Officer coordinating with the Office of Information Technology (OIT).

Key accomplishments include launching an email-based IT helpdesk for coordinated and vision-aligned technical support; initiating an Operational Data Warehouse (ODW) to modernize educational data management with future milestones including a minimum viable product (MVP) by FY2027 and full deployment by FY2030; and rebuilding five department websites on a mobile-friendly platform, with launches planned for FY2025. The team also reintegrated teacher certification data through an API widget, ensuring broader data use across systems.

Additional achievements include developing AI best practices and testing AI agents, such as one trained on Alaskan education law; enhancing the intranet with SharePoint for improved collaboration; maintaining over 30 web applications, including significant updates to the Career and Technical Education application and the Report Card to the Public; and spearheading research and development initiatives to securely leverage AI for departmental use. These efforts underscore DEED IT's commitment to innovation and efficiency in supporting Alaska's educational mission.

Mt. Edgecumbe High School Highlights

Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) is a public boarding school located in Sitka, Alaska, serving students in grades 9 through 12. MEHS attracts students from over 100 communities across the state, offering educational opportunities often unavailable in their home regions. The school places a strong emphasis on college and career readiness, with a significant percentage of graduates pursuing post-secondary education.

In 2024, MEHS achieved several notable milestones. The school successfully renewed its accreditation for another six years through the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), as conferred by the Cognia Global Commission.

MEHS also restructured its residential schedule to promote healthier lifestyles by gradually transitioning evening activities from high-energy to low-energy, encouraging greater independence during quiet hours, improving sleep habits, and enhancing life skills. Additionally, the school's music program continued to thrive, with increased enrollment in music classes, impressive end-of-term concerts, a growing number of students qualifying for honor choir and honor band, and expanded participation in the pep band, which performs at all home basketball games.

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

The Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC) plays a vital role in upholding educators' ethical and professional standards in compliance with state laws and contractual obligations, as outlined in AS 14.20.370–14.20.510. The PTPC, funded by certificate holders per AS 14.20.020, ensures accountability within Alaska's educational system.

In FY2024, the PTPC reviewed 45 cases for investigation and sanctioned 15 educators. This number falls slightly below the 10-year average of 16 sanctions per year. Sanctions issued by PTPC range from warnings and reprimands to suspensions and revocations of teaching certificates. Comprehensive details of these actions will be available in the FY2024 Alaska Professional Teaching Practices Commission Annual Report.

Legislative Presentations and Reports

On February 2, 2024, the department provided an Education Financial Deep Dive Presentation to the House Education Committee on the funding sources for school districts. The presentation was also provided to the Senate Education Committee on February 19, 2024.

Finance and Support Services provides the Legislature with two annual reports on Fund Balances. The first report details the forecasted unreserved fund balance within a school district's operating fund per House Bill 76 (Chapter 2 SLA 2021). The second report is in response to the legislative intent language from House Bill 39 (Chapter 1, FSSLA 2023, Section 1, Pages 10-11). School districts report to the

department twice annually school district balances for the following funds: 1) school operating fund, 2) special revenue funds, 3) capital project funds, and 4) other governmental funds.

Responsive Services

While the DEED is not a disaster response organization, the department plays a key role in supporting school districts during facility-related emergencies such as fires, floods, or building failures. When notified of an incident, DEED's Facilities Section connects with district leadership to assess impacts, provide guidance, and coordinate with other resources as needed. Information is also provided to the Commissioner's office for coordination with other state agencies as needed.

Finance & Facilities Section

- Serves as the primary contact for districts operating state-owned facilities, assisting in insurance negotiations under 4 AAC 31.200(e).
- Provides support in cases impacting school operations, such as student count waivers or funding accommodations. For example, School Finance was prepared to assist the Bering Strait School District with a waiver if Stebbins students were temporarily housed in St. Michael following the Stebbins School fire.

Key Responses in 2023-2024

- Napakiak Erosion Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD): DEED Facilities staff visited Napakiak in June 2024 to assess the impact of Kuskokwim River erosion threatening the William N. Miller K-12 School. Discussions were held with LKSD, village leadership, and tribal entities regarding school operations for the 2024-2025 school year.
- Stebbins School Fire Bering Strait School District: DEED Facilities staff provided outreach and support following the fire, ensuring readiness to address operational needs and continuity.

Child Nutrition Programs

DEED's Child Nutrition Programs team responds to food service disruptions during emergencies, collaborating with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to secure waivers and reallocate resources.

- Newtok Fire LKSD: Following significant fire damage in January 2023, DEED secured waivers to allow LKSD to provide shelf-stable meals despite water and infrastructure challenges.
- Stebbins Fire Bering Strait School District: In June 2024, DEED began coordinating efforts to maintain meal program continuity.

Maintenance of Equity

In December 2024, the U.S. Department of Education resolved allegations against Alaska's education funding formula concerning the Maintenance of Equity (MOEquity) provisions under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The federal department had challenged Alaska's distribution of state funds across districts, suggesting it was inequitable. Alaska argued that its formula met the MOEquity requirements, as it was not reduced despite the state receiving more than \$500 million in federal aid through ARPA. In fact, Alaska's education funding formula increased with the passage of the Alaska Reads Act during this period.

Austin Reid, a Federal Affairs Advisor for the National Conference of State Legislatures, identified three characteristics of state funding formulas that have caused problems with MOEquity compliance. During a presentation to the Alaska Senate Education Committee last April, Reid explained:

1. Foundation formulas allocate additional resources to students needing extra support.
2. Equalization mechanisms balance state funding with local tax capacity.
3. Hold-harmless provisions provide a gradual reduction in funding to districts with declining enrollment, allowing them time to plan for downsizing.

Alaska's formula addresses all three factors, adding to its complexity. Moreover, Alaska has been nationally recognized for its effective funding approach. In the Education Law Center's *Making the Grade 2019*¹¹ report, the state received an "A" for funding distribution—the highest score among all 50 states—and a "B" for funding effort, placing it in the top 15 nationwide.

The state's legislatively approved formula reflects Alaska's vast geographic and demographic diversity and is designed to meet the needs of all Alaskans. This decision reaffirmed that the state Legislature has the authority to determine how state education funds are allocated.

The federal government's withdrawal of its claims confirmed Alaska's stance that its funding approach was fair and effective in meeting the educational needs of its diverse communities. This resolution vindicated Alaska's position on the matter, showcasing its commitment to equitable and robust educational funding.

¹¹<https://edlawcenter.org/assets/Making-the-Grade/Making%20the%20Grade%202019.pdf>