



# *Alaska State Legislature*

Representative Peggy Wilson  
House District 2

## **SPONSOR STATEMENT** **HB 215**

**"An Act relating to student counts for school funding purposes; and repealing school experience for salary scales provisions."**

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HB 215 repeals salary scale limitations for hiring new out of state teachers, allowing for more competitive recruitment efforts. The bill will also average a spring and fall student count to determine school funding and make it applicable for the following school year which will give schools the ability to set budgets based on concrete funding numbers.

HB 215 will help address multiple problems facing Alaska's education system. It will help school districts hire staff for hard-to-fill positions. Specialty positions, such as therapists and special needs teachers are in high demand in school districts across the country, and we have a shortage here in Alaska. Current statutes limit the amount of out of state professional experience that may be used to establish a teacher's position on the salary scale. By repealing this antiquated statute, districts will be able to negotiate salaries on a case by case basis, this will help keep Alaska competitive with the rest of the country when vying for needed educational professionals.

Secondly, HB 215 will change the way student counts for school funding purposes are conducted. This will help schools set a budget that allows them to retain teachers. Current statutes provide for one student count held in October of each year. Funding for the same year is dependent on that count. By that time, school districts have already set their budget, and if the count doesn't match that budget schools can be forced to cut positions they had contracted for the full year, exposing themselves to lawsuits.

HB 215 will establish counts in October and in February. These counts will be averaged and then used to determine funding for the following year; allowing school districts to know the minimum funding they will get in the upcoming year and set their budgets with concrete funding numbers. There will be an additional average count using the February number, and the following October's number. If this average is higher, school funding will be increased for the current school year.

An additional benefit of having a student count in the late February is that it makes it in a school districts' best financial interest to keep students in school for the whole year. Drop out rates in Alaska are one of the highest in the nation. To better serve Alaska's youth, we need to do everything we can to improve our graduation rates and attack this problem from all angles.

**HOUSE BILL NO. 215**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE WILSON

Introduced: 4/3/09

Referred: Education

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 **"An Act relating to student counts for school funding purposes; and repealing school**  
2 **experience for salary scales provisions."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 \* **Section 1.** AS 14.17.500(a) is amended to read:

5 (a) A district shall prepare and submit to the department by **March 15**  
6 [NOVEMBER 5] of each fiscal year, in the manner and on forms prescribed by the  
7 department, an estimate of its ADM and other student count data, including per school  
8 student count data, for the **current and** succeeding fiscal year upon which  
9 computations can be made to estimate the amount of state aid for which the district  
10 may be eligible under AS 14.17.400 in the succeeding fiscal year. In making its report,  
11 the district shall consider its ADM, other student count data, the pattern of growth or  
12 decline of the student population in preceding years, and other pertinent information  
13 available to the district.

14 \* **Sec. 2.** AS 14.17.600(a) is amended to read:

1 (a) Within two weeks after the end of each of the 20-school-day periods  
 2 [PERIOD] ending the fourth Friday in October and the last Friday in February,  
 3 each district shall transmit a report to the department that, under regulations adopted  
 4 by the department, reports its ADM for that counting period, the average ADM over  
 5 the two consecutive counting periods for the previous fiscal year, and, for the  
 6 February report and October report, the current year, and other student count  
 7 information that will aid the department in making a determination of its state aid  
 8 under the public school funding program. [FOR CENTRALIZED  
 9 CORRESPONDENCE STUDY, THE OCTOBER REPORT SHALL BE BASED ON  
 10 THE PERIOD FROM JULY 1 THROUGH THE FOURTH FRIDAY IN OCTOBER.]  
 11 The department may make necessary corrections in the report submitted and shall  
 12 notify the district of changes made. The commissioner shall notify the governor of  
 13 additional appropriations the commissioner estimates to be necessary to fully finance  
 14 the public school funding program for the current fiscal year.

15 \* **Sec. 3.** AS 14.17.610(a) is amended to read:

16 (a) Except as provided in (d) of this section, the [THE] department shall  
 17 determine the state aid for each school district in a fiscal year on the basis of the  
 18 district's averaged student count for the October and February counting periods  
 19 [DATA] reported under AS 14.17.600 for the preceding and current fiscal years.  
 20 On or before the 15th day of each of the first nine months of each fiscal year, one-  
 21 twelfth of each district's state aid shall be distributed on the basis of the [DATA  
 22 REPORTED FOR THE] preceding fiscal year entitlement. On or before the 15th day  
 23 of each of the last three months of each fiscal year, one-third of the balance of each  
 24 district's state aid shall be distributed, after the balance has been recomputed under  
 25 (d) of this section [ON THE BASIS OF STUDENT COUNT AND OTHER DATA  
 26 REPORTED FOR THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR].

27 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 14.17.610 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

28 (d) If the averaged student count made and reported by a district under  
 29 AS 14.17.600 for the current year is higher than the averaged count made under that  
 30 section for the preceding fiscal year, the department shall recompute the state aid,  
 31 including per school student count data, to adjust for the higher average student count,

1           and the higher average count shall be used for the student count for the current year  
2           and for the estimates made for the succeeding fiscal year under AS 14.17.500. The  
3           February student count must be submitted to the department by March 15 of the  
4           current year for a recomputation to be made under this subsection.

5       \* **Sec. 5.** AS 14.16.050(a)(3)(C) and AS 14.20.220 are repealed.

6       \* **Sec. 6.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
7 read:

8           TRANSITION. In the first school year following the effective date of this Act, the  
9 student count completed in the immediately preceding school year shall be used as the  
10 average student count under AS 14.17.610(a) and (d), as amended and added by secs. 3 and 4  
11 of this Act, as though two student count periods had occurred for that year and added.

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

*Interim:*  
P.O. Box 109  
Wrangell, AK 99929  
Phone: (907) 874-3088  
Fax: (907) 874-3055

*Session:*  
State Capitol, Room 403  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182  
Phone: (907) 465-3824  
1-800-686-3824  
Fax: (907) 465-3175

## REPRESENTATIVE PEGGY WILSON HOUSE DISTRICT 2

### Sectional Analysis

#### House Bill 215

**"An Act relating to student counts for school funding purposes; and repealing school experience for salary scales provisions."**

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**Section 1.** Requires a school district to submit to the department by March 15 of each fiscal year student count data and an ADM estimate for the current and succeeding fiscal years so state aid can be estimated.

**Section 2.** Establishes two consecutive student count periods, one in February and one in October and requires that they be averaged. It also defines when those counts results need to be submitted to the Department.

**Section 3.** Requires that a school districts state aide is determined by student counts from both preceding and current fiscal years. Seventy five percent of this aide will be distributed equally on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of each of the first nine months of each fiscal year (July – March). The remaining balance of state aide will be distributed equally on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the last three months of the fiscal year (April – June). Prior to distribution this balance will be recomputed under **Section 4**.

**Section 4.** Requires that the if the average student count for the current year is higher than the averaged count from the preceding fiscal year, the department will recomputed state aid, taking into account the higher average student count.

**Section 5.** Repeals the statute limiting school experience for salary scale provisions.

**Section 6.** Defines the transition to the new student count method. In the first year the student count from the preceding school year shall be used as if it were an averaged count.

## **Applicable Statutes.**

### **Sec. 14.17.500. Student count estimate.**

(a) A district shall prepare and submit to the department by November 5 of each fiscal year, in the manner and on forms prescribed by the department, an estimate of its ADM and other student count data, including per school student count data, for the succeeding fiscal year upon which computations can be made to estimate the amount of state aid for which the district may be eligible under AS 14.17.400 in the succeeding fiscal year. In making its report, the district shall consider its ADM, other student count data, the pattern of growth or decline of the student population in preceding years, and other pertinent information available to the district.

(b) Part-time students shall be included in the student count data in accordance with regulations adopted by the department.

(c) When reporting a district's ADM, a part-time student who is a correspondence student may not be counted as more than one full-time equivalent student.

### **Sec. 14.17.600. Student counting periods.**

(a) Within two weeks after the end of the 20-school-day period ending the fourth Friday in October, each district shall transmit a report to the department that, under regulations adopted by the department, reports its ADM for that counting period and other student count information that will aid the department in making a determination of its state aid under the public school funding program. For centralized correspondence study, the October report shall be based on the period from July 1 through the fourth Friday in October. The department may make necessary corrections in the report submitted and shall notify the district of changes made. The commissioner shall notify the governor of additional appropriations the commissioner estimates to be necessary to fully finance the public school funding program for the current fiscal year.

(b) Upon written request and for good cause shown, the commissioner may permit a district to use a 20-school-day counting period other than the period set out in (a) of this section. However, a counting period approved under this subsection must be 20 consecutive school days unless one or more alternate counting periods are necessary to permit a district to implement flexible scheduling that meets the district's needs and goals without jeopardizing the state aid for which the district would ordinarily be eligible under this chapter.

**Sec. 14.17.610. Distribution of state aid.**

(a) The department shall determine the state aid for each school district in a fiscal year on the basis of the district's student count data reported under AS 14.17.600. On or before the 15th day of each of the first nine months of each fiscal year, one-twelfth of each district's state aid shall be distributed on the basis of the data reported for the preceding fiscal year. On or before the 15th day of each of the last three months of each fiscal year, one-third of the balance of each district's state aid shall be distributed, after the balance has been recomputed on the basis of student count and other data reported for the current fiscal year.

(b) Distribution of state aid under (a) of this section shall be made as required under AS 14.17.410. If a district receives more state aid than it is entitled to receive under this chapter, the district shall immediately remit the amount of overpayment to the commissioner, to be returned to the public education fund. The department may make adjustments to a district's state aid to correct underpayments made in previous fiscal years.

(c) Upon an adequate showing of a cash flow shortfall of a district, and in the discretion of the commissioner, the department may make advance payments to a district. The total of advance payments may not exceed the amount of state aid for which the district is eligible for the fiscal year.

Sec. 14.20.220. School experience for salary scales.

(a) *[Repealed, Sec. 52 ch 6 SLA 1984].*

(b) *[Repealed, Sec. 52 ch 6 SLA 1984].*

(c) *[Repealed, Sec. 52 ch 6 SLA 1984].*

(d) *[Repealed, Sec. 35 ch 46 SLA 1970].*

(e) For teachers holding bachelors' degrees, not more than six years of school experience outside the state may be substituted for a like period of school experience in the state when a teacher's position on the salary scale is established, and, for teachers holding masters' degrees, not more than eight years of school experience outside the state may be substituted for a like period of school experience in the state when a teacher's position on the salary scale is established.

(f) *[Repealed, Sec. 23 ch 37 SLA 1986].*

(g) In this section, "school experience" means a full-time elementary or secondary teacher in a public or nonpublic school as defined in AS

# ATP Alaska Teacher Placement



candidates:5058

districts:62

resumes:1530

jobs:53



## Alaska Teacher Supply & Demand

It is possible to learn quite a bit by looking at the annual supply and demand of teachers and school administrators across the state of Alaska.

We are frequently asked about the chances of being hired are for a school district, job category or school district. Well, this is our best information about the supply and demand of jobs by region and school district.

Trends can tell educators where jobs are likely to be found, and give some guidance as to patterns in high needs, and low needs certification areas. We only have overall numbers from this report, not specific data by certification area.

**Warning:** Don't read TOO much into trend data. Statistics are useful, but only one piece of the puzzle.

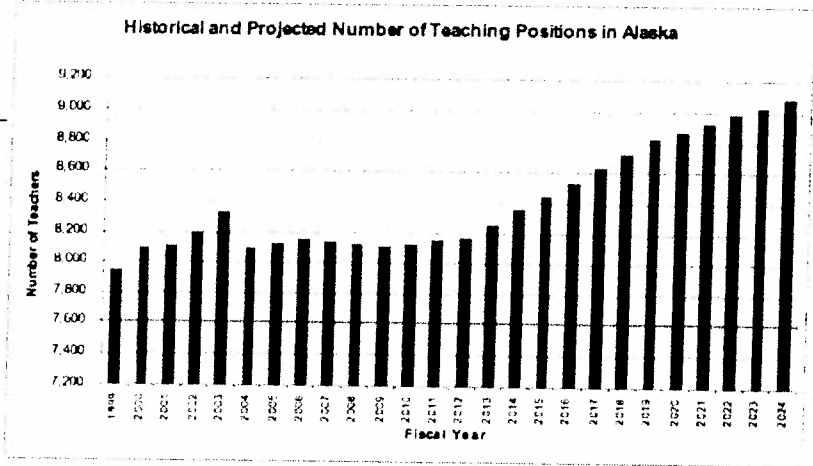
- Download Supply & Demand Report

### Supply & Demand in Context

Teacher supply and demand describes the ebb and flow of certified educators - teachers and administrators really - into and out of school districts in the state.

Why should you care? The supply and demand in any profession impacts the amount and characteristic of openings for new entrants.

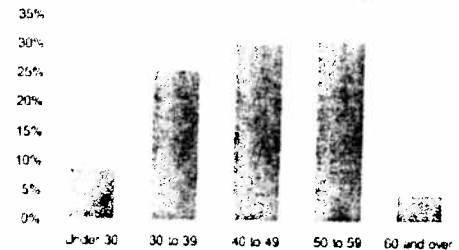
We have taken the ISER data, and looked patterns of need to determine where openings are likely to occur.



Here's what we found of particular interest to job candidates:

- School population drives the number of teacher openings
- Alaska's school population (ADM) is expected to remain fairly stable until 2009
- School ADM is expected to increase significantly from 2010 on
- Alaska requires between 8,100 - 8,200 teachers working each year
- About 35% of Alaska's teaching force is between 50 and 59 years old
- Alaska allows retirement after 20 years of service
- About 33% of current teachers (2,700 or so) will likely retire by 2010
- Alaska replaces (turns over) 14% of its teachers yearly for various reasons
- 1134 teachers are either new to Alaska teaching, or moving each year!
- Alaska universities only graduate 220 - 230 teachers each year
- Alaska needs between 900 - 1000 teachers from Outside each year
- Lowest Turnover: Urban (sort of!) districts with 10% - 13% annually
- Highest Turnover: Southwestern, Interior & Western rural districts with 26% - 28% annually

Age Distribution of Alaska Public School Teachers FY 2004



### Average Teachers Hired by District

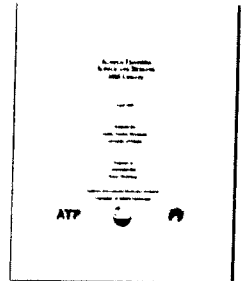
We took data from the ISER 2005 Supply & Demand Report, and calculated the average number of teachers hired by each district in a typical year. ISER used data gathered over five schools between 1998 and 2003.

District	%Turnover	# Teachers	# New Hires	District	%Turnover	# Teachers	# New Hires
Alaska Gateway	21	37	8	Kodiak	14	190	27
Arctic Region	30	6	2	Kuskokwim	34	46	16
Arctic East	31	94	10	Lake & Peninsula	35	52	18
Arctic West	32	10	3	Northwest Alaska	35	10	3
Arctic West	33	15	4	Lower Yukon	37	14	5
Central	33	10	3	Matanuska-Susitna	39	27	9
Interior	34	10	4	North Slope	41	14	5



Chatham	26%	22	6	Nenana	27%	26	7
Chugach	25%	14	4	Nome	23%	52	12
Copper River	14%	42	6	North Slope	21%	186	39
Cordova	18%	35	6	Northwest Arctic	26%	158	41
Craig	21%	31	7	Pelican	50%	4	2
Delta Greely	19%	52	10	Petersburg	10%	47	5
Denali	27%	29	8	Pribilof	34%	12	4
Dillingham	29%	40	12	Saint Marys	38%	13	5
Fairbanks	10%	917	92	Sitka	11%	110	12
Galena	14%	57	8	Skagway	21%	13	3
Haines	17%	31	5	Southeast Island	30%	13	4
Hoonah	16%	21	3	Southwest Region	31%	66	20
Hydaburg	41%	10	4	Tanana	46%	7	3
Iditarod	48%	36	17	Unalaska	13%	18	2
Juneau	13%	343	45	Valdez	12%	60	7
Kake	22%	15	3	Wrangell	13%	33	4
Kashunamiut	20%	23	5	Yakutat	31%	17	5
Kenai	12%	633	76	Yukon Flats	35%	37	37
Ketchikan	11%	145	16	Yukon Koyukuk	38%	30	11
Klawock	21%	10	2	Yupit	30%	21	6
<b>Alaska Average</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>8,076</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>Note: Latest data is from 4 school years ago.</b>			

## 2005 Supply & Demand Update



Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP) has contracted with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) between 2005 and 2007 to identify and analyze trends in K-12 educator supply and demand in the State of Alaska, including teacher turnover rates.

This report is an analysis of Alaskan teacher supply and turnover data from 1999-2004, and projects supply and demand data for the next five years.

## Is There a Teacher Shortage?

Concern has been expressed in recent years about a potential shortage of qualified teachers for the nation's schools. A number of factors are seen as contributing to shortfalls: Student enrollment is growing, the teaching corps is aging, and many teachers are nearing retirement age. Finding enough qualified teachers has been a problem for many schools and districts around the country, especially in Alaska. Often this difficulty has been seen as evidence of a national shortfall in qualified educators.

However, the United States does not have an overall shortage of teachers. Indeed, nationally, more teachers are trained than are needed on an annual basis. Nonetheless, there is a lopsided distribution of educators, both in terms of the geographic location of available teachers and in the numbers of teachers trained in particular fields. For example, there are shortages of teachers in specific subject areas, including special education, mathematics, and science (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

Still, retaining current teachers, rather than training new ones, is the larger problem nationally. Ingersoll (2003a, 2003b) found that increasing student enrollment and teacher retirements due to an aging workforce are not the primary causes of teacher shortages. Rather, the major factor driving teacher shortages is teacher turnover, both from educators migrating to new positions and from those leaving the teaching profession altogether, prior to retirement age. Studies have found that between 40 and 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years of their teaching career (Ingersoll and Kralik, 2004).

## Factors in Teacher Turnover

The primary reasons for educator dissatisfaction (in national studies) were poor salaries, poor administrative support, and student discipline problems.

While these studies offer important findings, they do not fully address the unique circumstances in Alaska that contribute to teacher turnover. For instance:

- Many schools in Alaska are in remote locations accessible only by plane or boat, so access can be both expensive and difficult.
- Housing availability and housing costs are often problematic (NANA Pacific, 2004), and in some rural Alaskan communities, teacher housing even lacks water and sewer hookups.

- Health care, shopping options, entertainment, and other "city" amenities can be quite limited.
- Teachers in rural schools are often required to teach multiple subjects across several grade levels.
- Cultural differences can create difficulties, especially for those who come to Alaska from the "lower 48" states. Alaska is home to many Alaska Native cultures; each having distinct languages, belief systems, traditions, and cultural practices, and it can be difficult for non-Native educators to learn how to work effectively within Native communities.

No comprehensive study of teachers who leave their jobs has been conducted in Alaska. However, McDiarmid, et. al., (2002) surveyed a sample of teachers in Alaska (n=135) who left their jobs at the end of the 2000-2001 school year, to try to understand why teachers either changed districts or left the career of teaching entirely.

When asked why they changed districts, the vast majority of teachers cited personal or family reasons (80%). Many also indicated they wanted to reside elsewhere (63%), were dissatisfied with district administrative support (61%), community support of the school (51%) or school board support (45%).

Affordable housing and higher quality housing were also significant concerns (46% and 38%).

Salary was only a concern for 22 percent overall, although teachers moving between urban districts were much more likely to change positions due to salary (50%) than rural educators (14%).

Better medical care was of concern to rural educators (30%) and not at all (0%) for urban teachers changing districts.

When asked to explain why they left teaching completely, subjects cited family or personal reasons (59%), the choice to pursue another career (50%), dissatisfaction with job description or responsibilities (45%), and dissatisfaction with community support of the school (37%). Better salary or benefits were only cited by 21 percent of those leaving the teaching profession. Health issues were another significant reason for teachers' departure (18%).

- Download the Alaska Teacher Supply & Demand Report 2005 in PDF format.

## Add Your Own Information!

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Since the ATP website uses a wiki database engine, you can add links that you think are good by simply creating an account, and directly editing any page yourself!

Adding your links, resources and suggestions to the ATP website is quite easy once you give it a try, and you won't break anything. You can even create new pages, and upload pictures.

Together we can build a better website, and a social network of Alaska teachers, administrators and job candidates helping each other!

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