

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Interim:

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**Session:**

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REPRESENTATIVE NANCY DAHLSTROM

HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 360: "An Act relating to the provision of information regarding a student by a school district to the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, Alaska Challenge Youth Academy."

A high school diploma is an essential first step for the youth of Alaska to become productive members in our communities. Children who drop out or are expelled from school are unlikely to return to the classroom on their own. It is essential that these at-risk children are presented with every opportunity to enroll in a program that will help them finish their high school diploma or complete their General Education Diploma (GED).

House Bill 360 requires school districts to provide the names, addresses, and dates of attendance of students who have dropped out of high school to the Director of the Alaska Challenge Youth Academy. The school districts would be required to provide this information biannually: January 15th and July 15th. These deadlines will allow ample opportunity for the Academy staff to reach out to potential students.

The Alaska Challenge Youth Academy is a great option for young people to finish their high school career. The Academy offers a 22-week program designed to help youth achieve their high school goals, but also teaches them life coping skills, job skills, leadership/followership, health and hygiene, physical fitness, and community service. Students can attend the Challenge program to catch up in their academic studies and upon completion return to a local high school for graduation.

According to the Center for Labor Market studies, the earning potential for an individual without a high school diploma is a mere \$11,031 annually. Conversely, a student with a high school diploma or equivalent is \$23,059 annually.

With the passage of House Bill 360 these young people will be given the chance to achieve success at an early age. Our youth are our future and they should be presented with every opportunity available to achieve their high school education. I believe this is one step in affording them this prospect.

I appreciate the committee's consideration of this legislation.

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Sectional analysis

House Bill 360: "An Act relating to the provision of information regarding a student by a school district to the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, Alaska Challenge Youth Academy."

Section 1:

Amends AS 14.30 by adding a new section mandating the release of certain students' information to the Alaska Challenge Youth Academy. Students must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Between 15 and 19 years old
- 2) Previously enrolled in a school district
- 3) Plans to transfer or graduate were not provided to school
- 4) Have not earned a diploma or GED

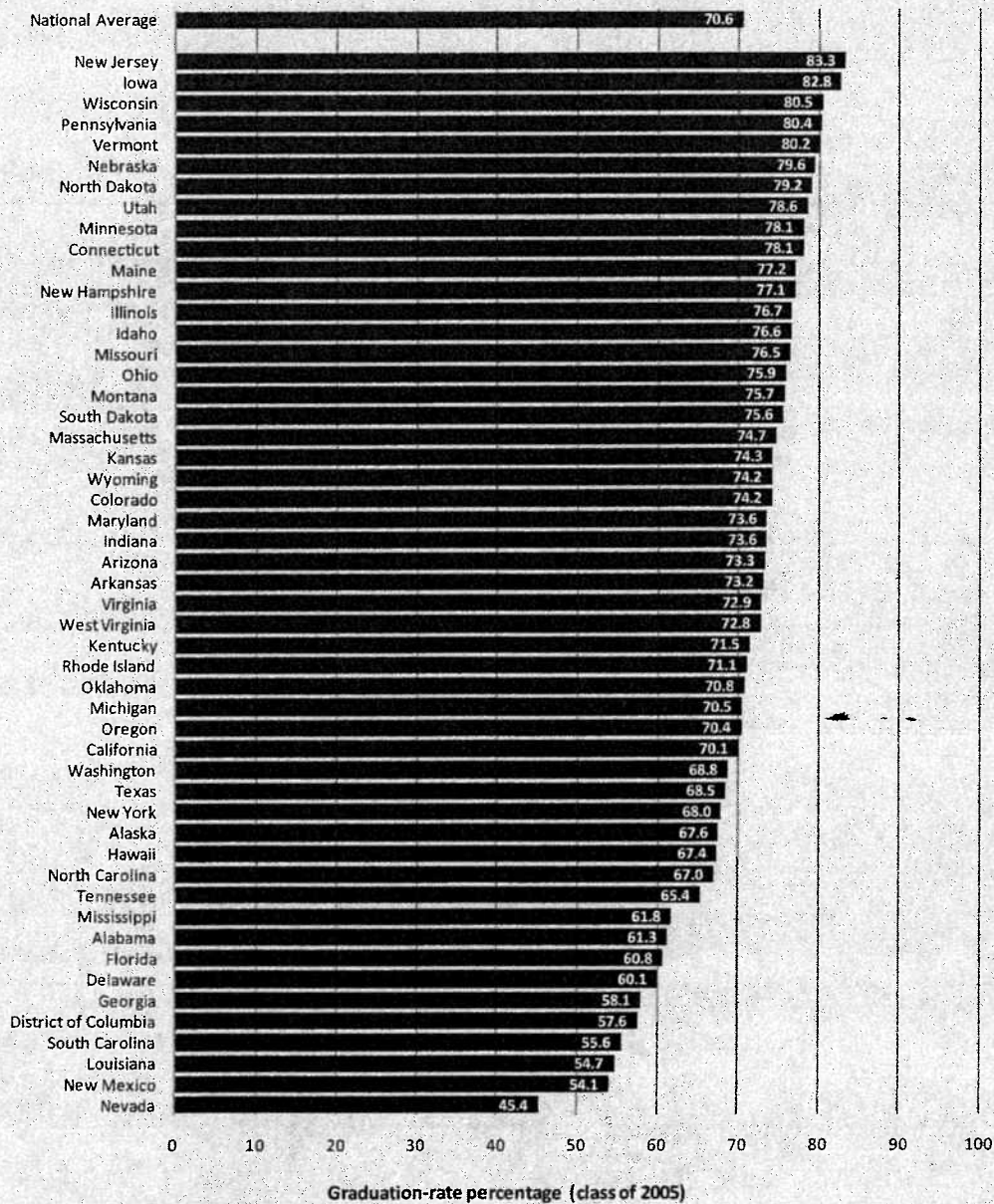
Their contact information will be provided to the Alaska Challenge Youth Academy biannually, on or before January 15 and July 15.

The school will notify the parent in writing before the information is released to the academy. If the student is 18 years of age or older, the notification will be provided to the student. The parent or student has 10 days to object. If there is objection, the district may not release the information.

The school district will not provide the information to any other entities, and they will certify the confidentiality of the students' information in writing.

Graduation in the United States

About 71 percent of all public school students in the nation graduated from high school with a regular diploma in the class of 2005. Thirty-eight percentage points separate the graduation rates in the best-performing and worst-performing states. More than eight in 10 students graduate in Iowa, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin. But that proportion drops to fewer than six in 10 in the District of Columbia, Georgia, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, and South Carolina. Results reported in *Diplomas Count 2008* show that between 2001 and 2005 the nation's graduation rate increased by 2.6 percentage points, signaling slow but steady progress.



STATE PROFILE 2004-05

Graduation Profile for the Class of 2005

Graduation Rate by Student Group

	Alaska State Average	National Average
	(%)	(%)
All Students	67.6	70.6
By Gender		
Male	61.8	67.8
Female	71.7	75.3
By Race and Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaska Native	46.8	50.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	67.8	81.3
Hispanic	24.4	57.8
Black (not Hispanic)	59.0	55.3
White (not Hispanic)	74.4	77.6
By Gender and Race and Ethnicity		
Male		
American Indian/Alaska Native	42.0	45.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	70.6	77.5
Hispanic	†	52.0
Black (not Hispanic)	48.7	48.2
White (not Hispanic)	70.7	74.3
Female		
American Indian/Alaska Native	50.5	52.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	69.8	82.8
Hispanic	57.1	62.7
Black (not Hispanic)	65.9	61.3
White (not Hispanic)	77.7	79.8

† Value not calculated because necessary data field(s) not reported in the Common Core of Data, the U.S. Department of Education database used for this analysis.

‡ Value not reported because of insufficient data for reliable estimate.

Table 70: Reported Reasons for Dropping Out

Dropout Reason	Count	Percent	Dropout Reason	Count	Percent
Grade 7			Grade 8		
Expelled	3	13.04%	Expelled	3	13.04%
Due to Illness	1	4.35%	Failing	1	4.35%
Non-attendance	8	34.78%	Non-attendance	7	30.43%
Family problem	1	4.35%	Non-district sponsored home school	5	21.74%
Unknown	10	43.48%	Administrative Drop	1	4.35%
Total Grade 7	23	100.00%	Unknown	6	26.09%
			Total Grade 8	23	100.00%
Grade 9			Grade 10		
Expelled	6	5.50%	Expelled	16	9.82%
Due to Illness	2	1.83%	Due to Illness	1	0.61%
Failing	1	0.92%	Failing	1	0.61%
Non-attendance	71	65.14%	Employment	1	0.61%
G.E.D.	2	1.83%	Non-attendance	98	60.12%
Enter Military	1	0.92%	G.E.D.	11	6.75%
Non-district sponsored home school	5	4.59%	Enter Military	3	1.84%
Family problem	3	2.75%	Non-district sponsored home school	6	3.68%
Administrative Drop	2	1.83%	Family problem	3	1.84%
Unknown	16	14.68%	Administrative Drop	9	5.52%
Total Grade 9	109	100.00%	Pregnancy	1	0.61%
			Unknown	13	7.98%
			Total Grade 10	163	100.00%
Grade 11			Grade 12		
Expelled	15	7.35%	Expelled	8	2.14%
Due to Illness	1	0.49%	Due to Illness	4	1.07%
Employment	3	1.47%	Employment	12	3.22%
Non-attendance	126	61.76%	Non-attendance	198	53.08%
G.E.D.	19	9.31%	G.E.D.	48	12.87%
Non-district sponsored home school	3	1.47%	Enter Military	2	0.54%
Family problem	1	0.49%	Non-district sponsored home school	8	2.14%
Administrative Drop	16	7.84%	Family problem	4	1.07%
Pregnancy	1	0.49%	Administrative Drop	27	7.24%
Unknown	19	9.31%	Pregnancy	2	0.54%
Total Grade 11	204	100.00%	Unknown	60	16.09%
			Total Grade 12	373	100.00%
Grades 7-12					
Expelled	51	3.59%	Enter Military	6	1.37%
Due to Illness	9	0.32%	Non-district sponsored home school	27	6.23%
Failing	3	1.69%	Family problem	12	0.42%
Employment	16	56.49%	Administrative Drop	55	0.95%
Non-attendance	508	8.87%	Pregnancy	4	0.63%
G.E.D.	80	6.02%	Unknown	124	13.41%
			Total Grades 7-12	895	100.00%