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Alternative Schools

Overview

Alaska's Alternative Schools (defined as those serving high-risk students) provide a spectrum of critical educational and health enhancing services to, arguably, Alaska's most vulnerable youth. While the state's Alternative Schools serve a broad student population including students from all backgrounds, their student composition profiles differently that the student body that typifies Alaska's traditional schools. Alaska's Alternative Schools primarily serve youth who have been unable to achieve academic success in traditional school environments for one or more of a constellation of reasons. Examples of the identified student barriers to learning include homelessness, poverty, untreated mental health issues such as depression and social anxiety, teen parenting, substance use and abuse and unaddressed health needs.

The statewide Alaska Alternative Schools Coalition serves all 12 alternative schools in Alaska and is funded through a collaboration with DHSS's Division of Behavioral Health. This interdepartmental partnership, borne out of a shared understanding that student health and learning are interdependent, provides vital health enhancing services and programming for students. The AASC develops trauma-engaged strategies, programs, policies and practices tailored to meet the needs of each of its member schools. A common core across all of the schools is the goal of enhancing student health and academic achievement by providing strategic opportunities for students to develop and maintain more healthy relationships at school and in their communities.

Reports

[Alaska Alternative Schools Coalition Impact Report Executive Summary 2025 \(/alt/Alaska%20Alternative Schools Coalition Impact Report Executive Summary 2025.pdf\)](#)

[Alaska Alternative Schools Coalition Impact Report 2025 \(/alt/Alaska%20Alternative Schools Coalition Impact Report 2025.pdf\)](#)

[They come here for sanctuary educator perspectives on trauma engaged alternative education \(/alt/They%20come here for sanctuary educator perspectives on trauma engaged alternative education \(1\).pdf\)](#)

Data

The Alaska Alternative Youth Risk Behavior Survey results, from 2009 to present, provide additional insight into the self-reported myriad of social, psychological, and behavioral challenges that must be addressed before students can maximize their academic potential. For example, Alaska's Alternative School youth reported disproportionately elevated levels of victimization: they were twice as likely to have

acknowledged being the victims of domestic violence as well as sexual assault, indicated higher levels of hopelessness, and reported lower levels of community support/connectedness than their traditional school peers. Indeed, the 2019 Alternative School YRBS results reveal a nearly universal pattern in Alaska's Alternative School students of heightened involvement in the risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of premature death, disease, injury, and social challenges in the US.

Visit the Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results (<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbsresults.aspx>) site.

The following link contains the analysis of the 2019 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey results for Alternative Schools and Traditional Schools:

2019 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results (<https://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbs19.aspx>)

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