

Special Education in Alaska

From Frontline Educators

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Who serves our students?



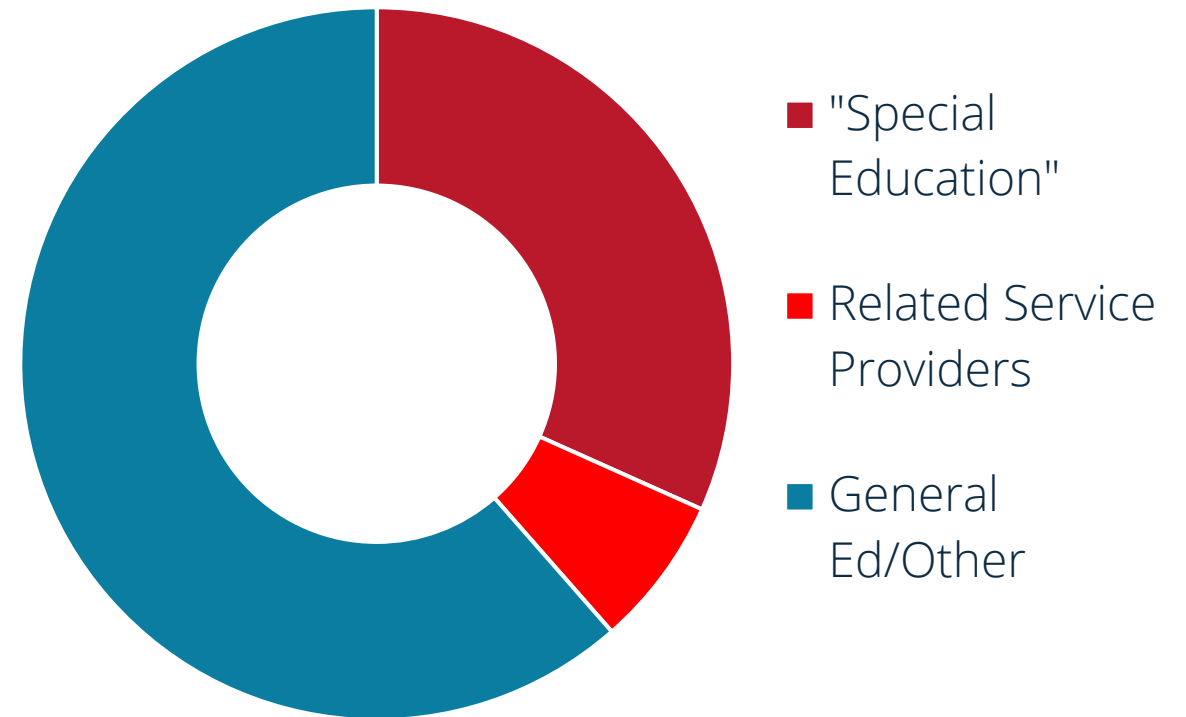
Special Education Teachers **Special Education** **Paraprofessionals** **Related Service Providers**

- Counselors
- School Psychologists
- Speech & Language Pathologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- School Nurses
- School Social Workers
- ...and more!

Alaska Teacher & Personnel*

- Total postings 1653
- "Special Education" Positions 524
- Related Service Providers 113

Current Postings



Source: aerrc.org, accessed February 28, 2025

*Formerly Alaska Teacher Placement, now part of the Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center

Background

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that ensures students with disabilities are provided with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs.

Free & Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Students with disabilities have a legal right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Each qualified person with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability, is entitled to FAPE.

For more information, please see: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/IDEA-History>

Background, cont'd

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written plan developed for a student identified with a disability by a team of education professionals, the parent/guardian, and the child (when appropriate) that describes the special education instruction, supports, and services a student needs to receive free appropriate public education (FAPE).

National Trends:

Students receiving SpEd services are going up nation-wide. According to the U.S. Department of Education, EdFacts Data Warehouse, from FY22 to FY23, students qualifying for services based on the following disabilities have increased in the US. Alaska is seeing similar trends.

Speech/Lang Impairment

- PreK - 10.3%
- School Age - 2.9%
- Total increase in students = 51,653

Developmental Delay

- PreK – 11.5%
- School Age – 3.7%
- Total increase in students = 34,916

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- PreK – 33%
- School Age – 9.7%
- Total increase in students = 100,782

For more information, please see: <https://www.ed.gov/data/edfacts-initiative>

Background, cont'd

Qualifying

Teams (including parents and educators) must determine eligibility for Special Education services by considering if their disability adversely affects their educational performance, whether the student requires services, and the specific educational needs of the student. This is an intensive process that requires a diagnosis, clearly identified needs, parent and teacher input, and a variety of testing done by professionals.



For more information, please see: https://education.alaska.gov/Media/Default/static/covid/AK_SPED_Handbook.pdf

Background, cont'd

Intensive Needs

4 AAC 52.700 (c) A student is eligible for funding as an intensive student if the student has been identified for special education and the student needs and receives individual attention and services that are significantly more complex and frequent, and require significantly more resources to provide, than the services received by other special education students. The services received by an intensive student will include services necessary to meet a critical medical need, services necessary to provide for the student's health, safety, and educational needs, and special education and related services provided by qualified staff for the entire school day both in and out of the classroom setting. A student who is able to function independently, with limited or no supervision, for a substantial period of time, inside or outside the classroom setting, is not an intensive student.

For more information, please see: <http://www.akleg.gov/basis/aac.asp#4.52.700>

**All Alaskan students need
champions!**

Critical Actions for Stronger Public Schools

Please support a significant and stable increase to the BSA.

Please support a return to a pension system for public employees.

Please consider legislation that will address caseloads and class size.

**Kim Ward-Massey,
Speech and Language Pathologist**

Anchorage Education Association

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District Itinerant

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Thank You.

Any questions?

Please consider legislation that will address caseloads and class size.