

ALASKA'S *Education* CHALLENGE

ALASKA'S EDUCATION CHALLENGE REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & EARLY DEVELOPMENT



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Guiding the Department of Education & Early Development

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.

Three Commitments

Increase Student Success

Cultivate Safety and Well-Being

Support Responsible and Reflective Learners



Call to Action

Alaska, in many ways, is still a frontier. We have opportunities that no other state in our country can claim. Our uniqueness is a strength, as it has been for many generations. This is not just true with resource development, natural beauty, and culture, but also with the opportunity to transform our education system into a relevant, high-achieving and family-friendly network of schools.

The founders of our state also viewed education as an opportunity. In fact, in the last few days of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, Delegate Roland Armstrong rose to make a motion.

“Mr. President, from the very beginning of this Convention it had been my hope that there might be from this Convention a statement or pledge to Alaska's children. I believe that it is time at the close of this Convention to say to the children of Alaska, in light of this completed Constitution, that we do solemnly make a promise to them and with them in our future State, and so, sir, I would move that a committee be appointed to draw up a resolution that would be known as a pledge to Alaska's children, this pledge to be signed by you, sir, as the President of this Convention; a pledge that would be able to be placed in every school room; a pledge that would say to them that we call upon them for their cooperation as we move toward statehood, because they will be the future citizens. I would hope that this would say that we are providing for them a place where they may practice the faith of their choice; an opportunity for education to meet today's problems; a country filled with trees and streams, bounded by adequate laws to help them in the future; and the possibility of a future state that can be theirs where they can operate as the citizens of tomorrow. So I move, sir, for this committee.”

A quality education system was not an afterthought in Alaska, it has always been foundational. Centuries before Alaska became a state, Alaska's indigenous people taught and learned culture, science, language, and other elements of rich traditional knowledge.

Education systems in the twenty-first century will most certainly be different, but they must not be valueless. Alaska's education system can be a demonstration of the values we share. Our schools must not only reflect Alaska's cultures, but should be a pinnacle of our traditions and ways of knowing.

Alaska's current system of public education has some of the most innovative and successful schools in our country. Our educators, parents, and students do not let geography, resources, or other challenges hinder the delivery of high-quality learning opportunities. These effective learning opportunities should be recognized and nourished even as we work together to improve.

Whether it be a one-thousand mile trek on a dog-sled or a 20,000 foot climb up one of the world's tallest mountains, Alaskans have a long history of facing even the most ardent challenges with determination. The fact is, Alaska has one of the largest achievement gaps in our country. Many of our students are not benefiting from the superior learning opportunities that exist in some of our communities. Compared to other states in America, Alaska ranks at or near the bottom in reading and math scores. These are educational challenges that will require the character, grit, and determination that have characterized Alaskans long before there was a system of public education.



During the past year, nearly 100 Alaskans came together to rethink our education system. They were charged by Governor Walker and the State Board of Education to better prepare our youth for the challenges of the future.

These dedicated Alaskans have proposed the recommendations you will find in this report. The mission, vision, and priorities will guide our actions as we remain committed to their vision of increasing student success, cultivating safety and well-being, and supporting responsible and reflective learners. It is no coincidence that these three commitments reflect Native values and traditions that have sustained Alaska's indigenous people for centuries. Our shared commitment to those values should be deliberate and intense as we transition to a new, more efficient and effective, education system.

For those who doubt the need or possibility of a better education system, I ask, "What is your vision for the future of Alaska's youth?" Either we are satisfied with how well our current system works for ALL students and do nothing to improve it, or we will be dissatisfied and commit to something better for ALL students. To be satisfied that some students do not have access to great learning opportunities is wrong. To do nothing about it, is irresponsible.

A better education system built on our values and successes will not be possible without the involvement of all Alaskans. Each community must want a great school enough to invest the hard work and take the action necessary to make it happen. We will never legislate, regulate, spend, cut, blame, promise, excuse or wish our way to great schools. We must want great schools so much that we will do whatever it takes to have them. We must have the character needed to share a vision and work together to support it. Alaska's Education Challenge should result in more successful learning opportunities for ALL of Alaska's students, regardless of location, race, or income. I am confident The Last Frontier has what it takes to pioneer a new kind of public education system for the 21st century.

Dr. Michael Johnson
Commissioner



Alaska's Education Challenge Process

In September 2016, Education Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson and the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development (State Board) made changes to the Department of Education & Early Development's (DEED) mission and vision statements and established the following five strategic priorities aimed at improving public education for all students in Alaska.

Strategic Priorities

1. Amplify Student Learning
2. Ensure Excellent Educators
3. Modernize the Education System
4. Inspire Tribal and Community Ownership of Educational Excellence
5. Promote Safety and Well-Being

Following the State Board's initial actions, Governor Walker, in his 2017 State of the State address, spoke of the need to improve public education in Alaska. The Governor's comments launched the current effort to craft changes in our education system that will address student achievement gaps and increase graduation rates by making sure that every student across the state has equitable opportunity to learn and succeed.

The following month, DEED released a public survey asking Alaskans to share their priorities for public education reform. Nearly 1,400 Alaskans in 109 communities submitted over 18,000 ideas for topics to be considered during Alaska's Education Challenge. The ideas were then coded and categorized, and the top categories were shared with the five committees.

In April 2017, Commissioner Johnson and the State Board formally kicked off Alaska's Education Challenge. Nearly 100 Alaskans from all corners of the state representing diverse backgrounds, interests, and experiences came together to work collaboratively and focus their efforts on developing up to three recommendations for each of the five strategic priorities set by the State Board.

Organized into five committees, the work of each committee spanned almost seven months and included two meetings in Anchorage, five audio-conference meetings, and many hours of reading, discussing, and processing ideas. Each committee was facilitated by a recognized Alaska education leader and co-chaired by members of the State Board.

On October 4, 2017 at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage, the committees finished their work and presented their recommendations to the State Board. On October 5, the State Board reviewed and accepted all 13 recommendations.



Report Summary

In this report you will find an overview of the Alaska's Education Challenge process, the 13 recommendations, and accompanying example action plans to help conceptualize the change effort required for each recommendation. Committee recommendations are available at <https://gov.alaska.gov/administration-focus/alaskas-education-challenge/>. Committee presentations are available on video at

<https://vimeo.com/album/4806489>.

State Board of Education

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.

Strategic Priorities

- Amplify student learning
- Inspire tribal and community ownership of educational excellence
- Modernize the education system
- Ensure excellent educators
- Promote safety and well-being

This report provides guidance on next steps. The report is not meant to be prescriptive, but to present the recommendations through the lens of three commitments to our students that Alaskans made clear throughout the committee presentations and recommendations.

These three commitments will guide the work centered on the State Board's mission: An excellent education for every student every day.

Alaska's Education Challenge brought Alaskans together to think deeply about the education system and decide what an excellent education for all students in Alaska looks like. Through this process a common thread has emerged: Alaskans want more - they are inspired to demand great schools. It is vital that we recognize, celebrate, and value the level of unity and collaboration that has resulted from this work. This unity is important to keep the work moving forward. The partners and stakeholders involved have elevated this work over the policy differences that exist in Alaska. They have found a way to come

together around a shared vision for an excellent education, to stand before Alaskans, and say with confidence that together, we have what it takes to make our public education system work for more of our students.

Their continued leadership and commitment to this work will define the transformation of Alaska's public education system. Just as important, their leadership will be necessary in order to implement the recommendations.

This report contains sample action plans that outline options for moving forward with educational reform. Reform will require more collaborative planning, partner leadership on specific initiatives, and feedback from Alaskans to create innovative solutions to promote educational reform.

Alaskans are making a commitment to:

Increase Student Success

Cultivate Safety and Well-Being

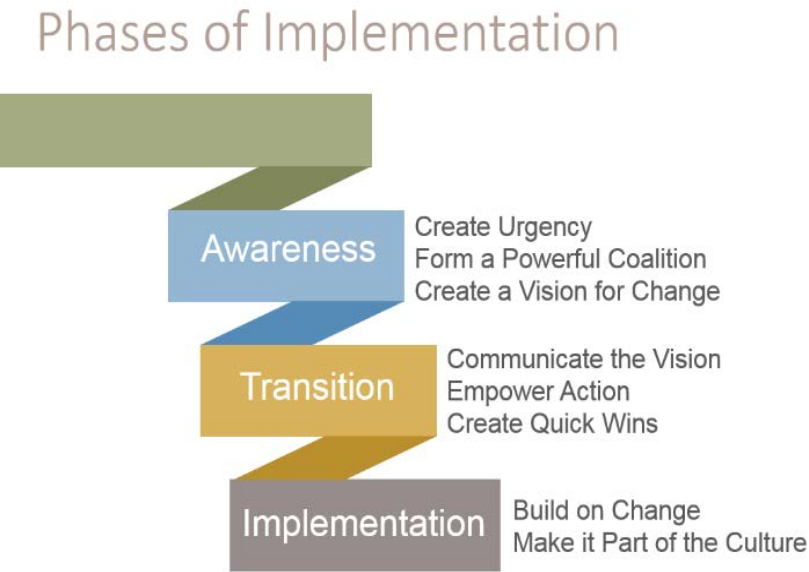
Support Responsible and Reflective Learners



The 13 recommendations from the five committees are enclosed in this report. They are presented as they were submitted to the State Board. Four of the committees presented three recommendations each. One of the committees presented one recommendation.

The State Board of Education accepted all 13 of the recommendations presented. Across Alaska, work has already begun on some of the recommendations; implementing some of the ideas will take less time than those where new ideas are presented. The enclosed example action plans provide information regarding connections to current work and promising practices from around the state.

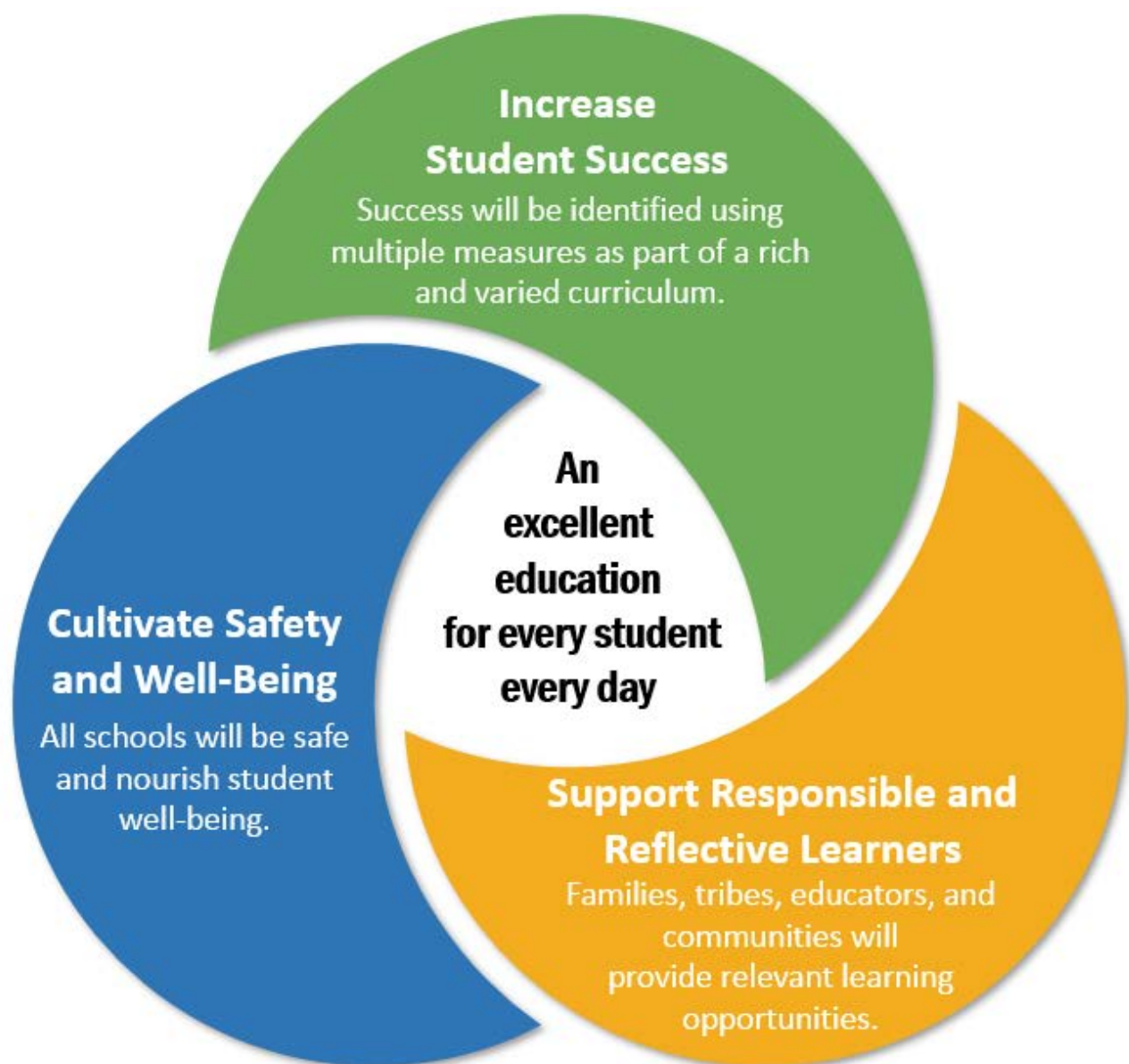
Progress on implementing these recommendations will occur in discernable stages. These stages are not static and will not require the same time frame for each recommendation. Each phase has distinct properties or actions. As work in these phases progresses and tasks are completed, the recommendation moves to the next phase.



It is important to note that the recommendations will be implemented on varying timelines due to their individual complexity and related programs and initiatives already in place. For example, recommendations made by the Student Learning Committee have already determined the urgency for challenging academic standards, and work supporting Alaska’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan is already underway. Strong connections to current work are present. On the other hand, the recommendation presented by the Tribal & Community Ownership Committee will first require more planning and outreach with numerous stakeholders. This new and innovative idea will take longer to implement.

The purpose of Alaska’s Education Challenge is to transform our public education system in ways that address student achievement gaps and increase graduation rates by making sure that every student across the state has equitable opportunity to learn and succeed. Alaska’s system of public education must cultivate in all of our students a vision for their own future. Change is never easy, and transforming our public education system will require the continued commitment of all Alaskans. However, the opportunity that lies before Alaskans and the level of unity and commitment to this work is unprecedented.

ALASKA'S *Education* CHALLENGE



Strategic Priorities, Recommendations & Commitments Crosswalk

Priority: Amplify student learning	Recommendation: Identify and articulate the knowledge, skills, and behavioral attributes necessary for all preschool through post-secondary students to succeed in a rapidly changing world, while valuing cultural and traditional knowledge, civic responsibility, and student interests, passions, and goals.	Recommendation: Ensure equity of access to high quality learning experiences for all students, preschool through post-secondary, and use a variety of culturally appropriate methods and multiple measures to identify successes, mitigate underperformance, and accelerate student achievement.	Recommendation: Make learning student-centered, ensuring that instruction and curricula are relevant, experiential, culturally responsive, and interest-based for all preschool through post-secondary students.
Priority: Ensure excellent educators	Recommendation: Create rigorous cohort-based professional learning academies based on best practices for preservice, new-to-Alaska, new-to-teaching, and career-changing educator candidates to develop Alaska-specific skills.	Recommendation: Grow education leadership through an educator leadership grant program.	Recommendation: Triple the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in Alaska, and specifically increase the number of NBCTs in hard-to-staff schools and districts, both through the provision of salary incentives.
Priority: Modernize the education system	Recommendation: Establish a systemic foundation for personalized student learning and consistent excellence.	Recommendation: Expedite the dollars, expertise, and other assets necessary to enable modernization.	Recommendation: Facilitate deep systemic collaboration and alignment to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and innovation.
Priority: Inspire tribal and community ownership of educational excellence	Recommendation: Create the option for self-governance compacting for the delivery of education between the State of Alaska and Tribes or tribally-empowered Alaska Native organizations.		
Priority: Promote safety and well-being	Recommendation: Every Alaska school must work to create a sustainable and positive school climate that is safe, supportive, and engaging for all students, families, staff, and communities.	Recommendation: Alaska's schools will create a culturally humble (responsive) and safe environment that recognizes the needs of the whole child, institutes trauma informed practices, and understands the vital importance of building all relationships surrounding every child to improve resiliency, health, and academic outcomes.	Recommendation: To ensure the physical and mental health needs of all students in all schools are addressed, students enrolled in public education will have direct access to school nursing/health and counseling services.
Commitments Key: Increase Student Success Support Responsible & Reflective Learners Cultivate Safety & Well-Being			



Commitment: Increase Student Success

Recommendations and rationale are presented as submitted by the Alaska's Education Challenge committees.

Recommendation: Knowledge, Skills, and Behavioral Attributes

Identify and articulate the knowledge, skills, and behavioral attributes necessary for all preschool through post-secondary students to succeed in a rapidly changing world, while valuing cultural and traditional knowledge, civic responsibility, and student interests, passions, and goals.

Rationale

- Student success requires going beyond educational “basics”. Student outcomes should include not only knowing, acquiring, and mastering content knowledge, but also demonstrating competency in behavioral attributes such as collaboration, creativity, problem-solving, flexibility, cultural and civic literacy, etc.
- Student success outcomes must be clearly defined so students, parents, and teachers know the learning targets, are able to personalize the delivery system, and can prepare graduates to thrive in all aspects of life. When student success outcomes are clearly defined and students also understand the purpose for what they are learning, students are more successful and engaged. When students believe their experiences and opinions are respected, their motivation, buy-in, and involvement increase no matter what path they choose to follow in life.
- Graduates of Alaska’s schools need to be prepared to contribute in a positive way to Alaska’s modern economy regardless of where they live, their personal interests and passions, or their cultural traditions. Student success will depend on the knowledge, skills, and behavioral attributes defined by Alaska’s student success outcomes and will result in sound decision-making, resilience, and self-reliance as graduates move into the future.

Recommendation: Measures of High Quality Learning

Ensure equity of access to high quality learning experiences for all students, preschool through post-secondary, and use a variety of culturally appropriate methods and multiple measures to identify successes, mitigate underperformance, and accelerate student achievement.

Rationale

- All of Alaska’s students, from preschool through post-secondary, must have equity of access and opportunity to quality learning experiences if they are to achieve the student success outcomes. This equity of access and opportunity does not currently exist.
- Recognizing that no two school districts in our state are alike, school districts must have the flexibility to ensure equity of access and aligned accountability systems while still responding to community and school needs. No single measure should be used to determine student success; instead, measuring success in a variety of ways will allow for a more accurate and fair representation of achievement. Ensuring equity of access to quality education, coupled with consistent accountability and assessments that are aligned to student success outcomes, will maximize Alaska’s investment in education.
- When all of Alaska’s children have equal access to high quality learning experiences that are culturally responsive, student achievement will be accelerated and underperformance will be greatly reduced.



Example Action Plan: Increase Student Success

Strategic Priority	Goals/Outcomes			Connections
	Awareness	Transition	Implementation	
Amplify Student Learning	Build awareness for administrators and educators around the various Alaska Content Standards and CTE Clusters & Curriculum Crosswalks. Possible strategies include: - District Technical Assistance - Literacy Development across content areas - English Language Learners - Formative Assessments - Technology Tools - e-Portfolios - Online Learning Environment - Model Lessons Consult with districts and other stakeholders to identify potential processes and procedures for the successful implementation of standards practices for all standards. Utilize the two divisions within DEED, Division of Student Learning and Division of Educator and School Excellence, to coordinate professional learning opportunities based on evidence-based practices. Survey districts to gain a better understanding of strategies such as: - Various assessments and strategies used to measure student success - Student centered learning opportunities offered	Connect rigor of standards to rigor of assessments (state and local) using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK). - Identify DOK of standards - Technical Assistance to districts to help identify the alignment of the rigor of the standards to the rigor of instruction - Formative assessment strategies to determine if this alignment occurs. Create models and systems to help districts and schools such as: - Map curriculum to integrate all subject areas - Develop an Implementation Plan - Teacher collaboration across districts and state - Integration of 21st century learning tools into curriculum With partners and stakeholders, explore and implement planning strategies such as: - Understanding by Design - Project Based Learning	Integrated instruction that includes assessments for classroom implementation. Processes and procedures in place for offering a variety of high-quality education opportunities including: - Learning opportunities for students that cross district boundaries - Creative solutions to overcome barriers - Networks of educators in place within a common content area	Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan - Challenging Content Standards (p. 7) - Statewide Accountability system (p. 10) Enhanced Learning Maps Project: Standards mapping tool and rigorous units being piloted by select Alaskan educators (Video) Standards Alaska English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards [adopted June 2012] - Grade Level Expectations Science Geography Government and Citizenship History - Technology Arts Early Learning Guidelines Alaska State Literacy Blueprint English Language Proficiency Standards for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students Cultural Standards for Students, Educators, Schools, Curriculum, and Communities Guide to Implementing the



	• Flexibility in coursework to meet the needs of individual students • Use of dual credit, distance learning, personalized learning, and cross-district course opportunities Identify stakeholders and partners to help districts and schools develop effective systems of standards, instruction, and assessment.	• Cross curricular and integrated teaching strategies		Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators • Essential Elements for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities, ELA & Math • Extended Grade Level Expectations for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities, Science • Extended Grade Level Expectations for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities, Science • Career Clusters & Curriculum Crosswalks
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Promising Practices and Examples

- [Copper River School District](#): Copper River offers a [flexible variable-term schedule](#) that includes a variety of hands-on and distance-delivered courses.
- [Career and Technical Education Academic Integration](#)
- The [North Slope Borough School District](#) is mapping and developing instructional programs and practices in accordance with the [Iñupiaq Learning Framework](#) (ILF) consistent with the district curriculum alignment, integration, and mapping effort.



Commitment: Support Responsible and Reflective Learners

Recommendations and rationale are presented as submitted by the Alaska's Education Challenge committees.

Recommendation: Student-Centered Instruction

Make learning student-centered, ensuring that instruction and curricula are relevant, experiential, culturally responsive, and interest-based for all preschool through post-secondary students.

Rationale

- When students believe their experiences and opinions are respected, then student motivation, buy-in, and involvement increase. Authentic student involvement in decision-making and planning, preschool through post-secondary, deepens student commitment and ownership.
- If school environments are nimble, multifaceted, and student-focused, then instruction will occur in a variety of settings. The school system should adapt to the student rather than expecting the student to adapt to the system. When school systems value students as unique learners and provide opportunities to make relevant connections by relating subject matter to life experience and community, student understanding is improved.
- No two students are alike; each has unique gifts. When meaningful, relevant curricula is student centered and culturally responsive, and teachers adapt instruction to meet the unique strengths and interests of each student, students will thrive. Involving students in designing their learning will help teachers provide the kind of education students need to succeed -- flexible pathways, alternative learning settings, and flexible calendars -- all focused on meeting Alaska's student success outcomes.

Recommendation: Professional Learning Academies

Create rigorous cohort-based professional learning academies based on best practices for preservice, new-to-Alaska, new-to-teaching, and career-changing educator candidates to develop Alaska-specific skills.

Rationale

- Because many of Alaska's school districts are small, there is a limited capacity in our state to offer professional development that adequately helps educators meet the challenges of working in Alaska's schools. By coordinating districts' professional development efforts into intensive academies, educators both new to the profession and new to the state can receive needed training prior to entering their first Alaska classroom.
- The academies would be offered in multiple locations and would utilize a cohort model to establish supportive and enduring relationships for attending educators. In order to draw on existing best practices found throughout the state, these academies will be offered through partnerships to include public, private, and non-profit organizations.
- The University of Alaska educator preparation students have varying experiences with the management of reading and literacy instruction. As such, the University of Alaska may not offer preservice educators experience in using evidenced-based reading and literacy content knowledge to fully meet the long-term reading and literacy challenges of Alaska. The academies could as needed, address this gap.
- To be successful, Alaska's educators require elements of preservice and professional development that are unique to the Alaska education context. Preservice preparation and induction into teaching in



Alaska's classrooms through the academies will include for example, rigorous and research-based coursework on culturally responsive teaching; best practices in literacy education; and trauma-informed practices. The academies' cohorts would span districts to create a professional learning community that is difficult to achieve.

Recommendation: Education Leadership Program

Grow education leadership through an educator leadership grant program.

Rationale

- Educator leadership is defined as additional duties taken on by the educator to influence in a positive manner the school culture, policy, and practices to support student learning. Districts will be invited to apply for educator leadership grants that encourage educators to apply to become professional leaders in locally-determined areas, such as mentoring, research, policy, or micro-credentialing with emphasis in cross-cultural integration, dyslexia, poverty, trauma-informed care, or other specific topics. Best practices in utilizing educational leaders to improve student learning are encouraged to be shared statewide.
- There is a growing national shortage of teachers, with a simultaneous greening of the profession as veteran teachers leave prior to full retirement age. High quality mentoring has been shown to support early career teachers to stay through the critical first few years of practice; principals often are responsible for monitoring and guiding the professional growth of well over 20 educators; and accomplished career teachers have been shown to benefit from leadership opportunities in addition to their classroom duties.
- By supporting educator leadership development at the district level these three gaps in the current system can be closed, resulting in the retention of earlier career teachers and an overall increase in student success as career educators collaborate to mentor young teachers.

Recommendation: National Board Certified Teachers

Triple the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in Alaska, and specifically increase the number of NBCTs in hard-to-staff schools and districts, both through the provision of salary incentives.

Rationale

- Teacher quality is directly related to student achievement (Harris & Sass, 2011) and competitive salaries attract better qualified teachers (Figlio, 1997; Hanushek et al., 2005).
- National Board Certification (NBC) from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is a rigorous process that requires teachers to analyze and reflect on their practice and demonstrate through standards-based evidence their effectiveness in impacting student learning, content knowledge, assessment, and engagement with colleagues and families. National Board Certification is the highest standard of the profession. By attaining National Board Certification, a teacher moves beyond basic licensure to a higher distinction of practice.
- For perspective, in 2000, there were 7 NBCTs in Alaska. That is only 22 less than Washington has prior to the 15% salary increase. After 17 years, Alaska has about 175, about 8,409 less than Washington. Prior to the addition of National Board bonuses for teaching in a high-needs school, about 9% of



Washington teachers in these schools were board certified. Currently about 35% of teachers in high-needs schools are board certified.

- There exists a support system with courses offered by the National Education Association (NEA) and an Alaska National Teacher Board Network to support NBCT candidates in completing this rigorous process, one that provides substantial growth opportunities for participants. There are some districts in Alaska who offer incentives to attract and retain educators in hard-to-fill positions (not based on NBC). Achievement of this NBCT goal would move all districts in Alaska from single-district negotiated incentives based on need to a standard practice based on need and teacher quality.

Recommendation: Personalized Learning

Establish a systemic foundation for personalized student learning and consistent excellence.

Rationale

- Change is all around us: Personalization is transforming traditional systems in almost every aspect of modern life. Ubiquitous access to technology is also changing educational options, the modern workplace, and the students we serve.
- Schools must also change: While the world for which we are preparing students has changed, the design of our schools has not. Student outcomes must adapt to the new realities or Alaska will continue to fall behind higher performing areas of the nation and the world.
- Underperformance can be eliminated: Currently, our system lacks consistent accountability and quality control. The highest performing systems in the world faced similar problems and developed mechanisms for eliminating underperformance and instilling quality control. There is much we can learn from them.

Recommendation: Enabling Resources

Expedite the dollars, expertise, and other assets necessary to enable modernization.

Rationale

- Creating systems for sharing expertise and other assets are as important as dollars in enabling student success.
- A strong funding system is: (1) predictable, (2) equitable, (3) responsive, (4) adequate, (5) efficient, and (6) flexible.
- Identifying, capturing, and repurposing savings that may result from modernization can reduce fiscal pressure as the system changes.

Recommendation: Systemic Collaboration

Facilitate deep systemic collaboration and alignment to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and innovation.

Rationale

- There are efficiencies and new opportunities in areas of common operations, professional growth, and student learning when entities share resources and work together.
- There is recognition by the general public and business community that they have some responsibility and mutual benefit in creating an educated and well-trained citizenry.



- Systemic collaboration toward the use of common educational strategies and learning opportunities helps define learning and teaching that fits Alaska best, provides a united community of learners, and builds a broad base of skills across our state.

Recommendation: Self-Governance Compacting

Create the option for self-governance compacting for the delivery of education between the State of Alaska and Tribes or tribally-empowered Alaska Native organizations.

- Definition: Self-governance compacting for the delivery of education means the Tribes or tribally-empowered Alaska Native organizations exercise their rights, in partnership with the State of Alaska, to assume the responsibility and associated funding to carry out programs, functions, services, and activities that the State of Alaska would otherwise be obligated to provide.

Rationale

- The State-Tribal compact affirms the State of Alaska's commitment to honor the government to government relationship between the State and Tribes to realize better education outcomes for students.



Example Action Plan: Support Responsible and Reflective Learners

Strategic Priority	Goals/Outcomes			Connections
	Awareness	Transition	Implementation	
Amplify Student Learning	Build awareness of current practices through DEED website and social media. Facilitate partnerships to develop options for students that allow options for learning that provide relevance: • Career and Technical Education • Industry • University System • STEM • Tribal Organizations Evaluate the status of the utilization of Career and Technical Education connections to provide alternate pathways for students. Survey districts to identify creative and innovative ways students are actively participating in their own learning: • Apprenticeships • Industry certification while in high school • Cultural connections	Assist with districts' curriculum alignment processes and procedures. With partners and stakeholders, explore and implement planning strategies that create flexibility and optimal engagement for students such as: • Understanding by Design • Project Based Learning • Cross curricular and integrated teaching strategies Create a model to help schools and districts work with students to identify individualized opportunities based on: • Interest • Special skills • Need Develop partnerships with institutions of higher education. Create a system for districts and schools to share innovative ideas and solutions to barriers.	Process and procedures in place for offering a variety of high-quality education opportunities including: • Learning opportunities for students that cross district boundaries • Creative solutions to overcome barriers • Networks of educators in place within common content areas Processes and procedures in place for alignment of curriculum and instruction. Partners actively participating with districts to help develop creative solutions and pathways for students.	Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan Career and Technical Education



Strategic Priority	Goals/Outcomes			Connections
	Awareness	Transition	Implementation	
Ensure Excellent Educators	Survey districts and Alaska teacher preparation programs to capture the current programs and their promising practices related to induction training, leadership development, and support for National Board Certification.	Identify promising practices and resources that could be utilized for statewide implementation.	Increase the percentage of new to Alaska teachers receiving induction training, educator retention rates, and the number of National Board Certified teachers in Alaska.	Trauma-engaged classroom and school training Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP)
	Consult with districts and other stakeholders currently offering induction training, leadership development, and support for National Board Certification.	Locate additional resources that would be necessary to establish statewide programs.	Conduct seminars (web-based and site-based) to facilitate professional learning.	Alaska School Leadership Institute (ASLI)
	Build awareness of current opportunities through DEED website and social media.	Partner with districts and other stakeholders that have existing capacity to offer induction training, leadership development, and support for National Board Certification statewide.	Conduct evaluations of State sponsored professional learning activities.	RTI Annual Conference Alaska studies and multicultural coursework requirement
	Communicate with Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) regarding requirements for the teacher and administrator preparation program. Strengthen collaborative relationships to facilitate the alignment of goals.	Determine the funding levels and resources required to support statewide implementation of induction training, leadership development, and support for National Board Certification.	Work with state legislature to review and update applicable statutes that support preparing, training, and recruiting high quality teachers and principals.	Alaska Learning Forward Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan
	Compile a list of existing professional learning activities.	Post informational materials that support the recommendations on the DEED website.	Work with the State Board to review, create, and update regulations that support the preparation, training, and recruiting of high quality teachers and principals.	• Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators (p.43) • Supporting Effective Instruction (p. 64) • Professional Development connected to School Improvement (p. 37)
	Prepare professional learning focused presentations to promote the awareness of the recommendation.	Modify content and resources as necessary.		Title II-A Preparing, Teacher and Principal Quality and Support
	Strengthen relationships with professional organizations.			• Federal • State
				Institutions of Higher Education Teacher Preparation Mandatory Training eLearning



Strategic Priority	Goals/Outcomes			Connections
	Awareness	Transition	Implementation	
Modernize the Educational System	Modernize Education System Determine opportunities for implementing technology tools and curriculum content that promote 21 st century skills and that personalize the learning experience. Identify and highlight exemplars within Alaska's schools that promote 21 st century skills and that personalize the learning experience. Survey districts regarding infrastructure that supports technology implementation in schools. Determine areas within Alaska's public school system where systemic collaboration would create efficiency, innovation, and cost savings. Identify and highlight existing collaborations between schools and districts that support increased student learning opportunities and outcomes.	Modernize Education System Educate stakeholders about the diversity of personalized learning models as they apply to brick and mortar, correspondence, charter, and vocational schools. Identify the statutes and regulations that need to be changed to support personalized learning, fiscal mechanisms that support modernization and systemic collaboration, and create an action plan to change them. Present applicable changes to statutes and regulations to the State Board. Establish working groups of critical stakeholders to guide the creation of statewide systems for personalized learning and networks for systemic collaboration.	Modernize Education System Work with the state legislature to review and update applicable statutes that support personalized learning and fiscal mechanisms that support modernization and systemic collaboration. Update regulations that support personalized learning, fiscal mechanisms that support modernization and systemic collaboration. Increase utilization of distance-delivered courses and other forms of digital content to expand opportunity for students, reduce duplication among districts, and reduce cost.	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan - Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment (p. 75) - Well Rounded Education - Technology Technology Standards University Teacher Preparation Programs Alaska Superintendents Association Association of Alaska School Boards Alaska Association of School Business Officials Alaska Administrative Code Public School Funding Overview Review of Alaska's School Funding Alaska School District Cost Study Chart of Accounts
	Modernize Finance Study current statutes and regulations related to funding to determine what funding flexibilities exist, determine where barriers exist, and what additional flexibilities should be created. Conduct an in-depth review of the Foundation Formula, with specific attention paid to the fiscal impacts on	Establish a statewide network of innovative schools, geared to exemplify best practices for a 21 st century education system and personalized student learning. Design a digital repository and	Ensure personalization pedagogy and skill development included in all approved teacher preparation programs at University of Alaska. Facilitate District-to-District resource sharing of: Instruction and student	



	innovation and modernization within the education system. Identify Partnerships in Education Presentations at School/Education Administrative conferences, i.e. ALASBO, AASB; to identify other financial resources. Work with the University system in Alaska, and approach the Superintendent Endorsement Program.	a means of sharing innovative instructional approaches, teacher expertise and curriculum across the Alaskan school system, and enable user rating and feedback. Create a shared academic enrichment and professional events calendar available to all districts statewide to encourage student and professional collaboration. Develop statewide calendaring and scheduling mechanisms that allow for sharing of resources and course offerings for students. Modernize Finance Create online tools such as MOE Calculator or aspects of the foundation formula calculations. Create a broad based FAQ.	support at distance via VTC and/or short term intensive education opportunities. • High-quality coursework managed by individual districts made available to partner districts to increase course offerings for students • Online courses sourced by districts to others across the state. • Sharing of administrative and business functions to expand capacity. Promote time set aside at state conferences for cross-district sharing and professional learning. Leverage collective buying power for professional services, technology, and digital content purchases. Modernize Finance Create a system for financial and/or resource oversight to ensure state and federal compliance.	
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Strategic Priority	Goals/Outcomes			Connections
	Awareness	Transition	Implementation	
Inspire Tribal and Community Ownership of Educational Excellence	Consult with a wide variety of stakeholders regarding vision and readiness of compacting. Consult with Department of Law to identify next steps, outline processes, and identify potential challenges. Consult with Department of Health and Social Services regarding processes used in existing compacting relationships. Consult with other states that have utilized tribal compacting regarding the planning, organizing, and implementing of compacts. Examine current processes and procedures in place and determine connections in creating charter schools and compacting.	Create a procedure with stakeholder input regarding identifying criteria for possible district candidates. Clearly defined expectations, roles, and responsibilities for compacting process created. Ongoing scheduled meetings with tribal organizations and stakeholders.	Compacting agreements in place. Statute, regulations, and policy in place for successful implementation. Statutes and regulations are updated for successful implementation.	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan Alaska Administrative Code Charter School Regulations Charter Schools



Promising Practices and Examples

- [Lower Kuskokwim School District](#): Lower Kuskokwim's **Two and Done accelerated certification program** develops teachers with knowledge of Yup'ik language and culture.
- [Sitka School District](#): Sitka has adopted a **transparent budget model**, and is an innovative leader of **integrating technology into learning**.
- [North Slope Borough School District](#): North Slope [instruction is rooted in Iñupiat values and language](#), so students develop academic and cultural skills.
- Compacting: [Department of Health and Social Services](#) compacting processes and procedures currently in place.



Commitment: Cultivate Safety and Well-Being

Recommendations and rationale are presented as submitted by the Alaska's Education Challenge committees.

Recommendation: School Climate

Every Alaska school must work to create a sustainable and positive school climate that is safe, supportive, and engaging for all students, families, staff, and communities.

Rationale

- School Climate
 - The climate of a school is the visceral, almost palpable, 'sense' of safety and belonging that people experience on site. It can be described as warm or cool, safe or unsafe.
 - Research shows that a positive school climate directly impacts indicators of school success such as increased teacher retention, lower dropout rates, decreased incidences of violence, and higher student achievement. A positive school climate promotes student learning and healthy development.
 - To transform our schools in Alaska and achieve breakthrough results, we must place school climate as one of our highest priorities.
- School Connectedness and Understanding of School Expectations
 - In a 2012 study conducted by Anchorage United for Youth, it was found that the more protective factors youth report in their life, the greater their likelihood of decreased risk factors (alcohol use, binge drinking, marijuana use, school absenteeism) and increased positive behaviors (attending school regularly, getting As and Bs in school). School climate factors such as believing teachers care about students, clear boundaries and consequences, feeling safe at school, having positive norms, and positive, meaningful youth engagement, all bolster these protective factors that create an environment in which students make healthy choices.
 - 2015 Statewide Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey data shows that 62% of students in traditional high schools feel their teachers really care about them and show them encouragement and 66% feel that their schools have clear rules and consequences for behavior. These data points indicate a tremendous opportunity to improve school climate.
- Bullying
 - Bullying of students both on and off school grounds is a growing concern.
 - 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey: 8.8% of Alaska high school students reported not going to school on at least one day in the last 30 days before the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school. This percentage has been increasing since 2007.
 - Every school year since DEED began collecting data in 2007, between 1400 and 2100 student suspensions for bullying, harassment, and intimidation have occurred in Alaska K-12 public schools. This data reflects only the most severe incidents.
 - According to the 2015 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 22.8% of high school students at traditional high schools were bullied on school property and 17.7% were electronically bullied in the last year.
- Absenteeism



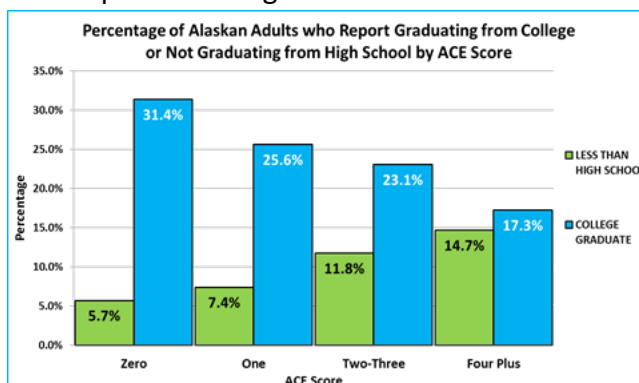
- o School climate impacts school attendance and Alaska's rate of chronic absenteeism is about twice the national average.
- o Alaska Department of Education data show 243,772 full-day unexcused absences were reported by Alaska school districts during 2015-2016 school year. (129,588 students were enrolled in public schools in 2015-2016 school year.)
- o The Alaska Department of Education data shows 15,154 students, or approximately one in every 9 students were truant during the 2015-2016 school year. (Truancy in Alaska is defined as five or more full days of unexcused absence during any school year.)

Recommendation: Trauma-Engaged Schools

Alaska's schools will create a culturally humble (responsive) and safe environment that recognizes the needs of the whole child, institutes trauma informed practices, and understands the vital importance of building all relationships surrounding every child to improve resiliency, health, and academic outcomes.

Rationale

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
 - o Unfortunately, Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs are common for our children in Alaska as well as for children nationwide. Indeed, in Alaska, for preschool children from birth to age 5, 40.2%; for elementary students age 6-11, 51.9%; and for middle and high school aged students ages 6-12, 61.7%; have already experienced at least one ACE. As educators, we see the impact trauma has on children and youth every day, as they cannot help but bring it to school.
 - o ACEs often adversely impact students' behavior and their ability to learn, but exciting advances in understanding of trauma and how to address it in school settings have emerged over the past decade. This understanding offers public education a tremendous opportunity to improve the health and academic outcomes for countless students.
 - o Changes to current school practices, policies, and philosophy that better meet the needs of students struggling with the impacts of trauma will strengthen relationships with students, educators, families, and their communities and transform the educational experience for both vulnerable students and the school staff who support them.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences and Educational Achievement
 - o Alaskan adults who have experienced four ACEs are approximately two and a half times less likely to have graduated from high school. Additionally, Alaskans with four ACEs are about half as likely to have graduated from college. Educational achievement outcomes for Alaskan adults who experienced higher ACE scores can be seen here.



- Disciplining Trauma-Based Behavior
 - In the 2015-2016 School Year, there were 10,160 in-school and 10,381 out-of-school suspensions for a total of 20,585 student suspensions in Alaska public schools.
 - 1 in every 13 students was suspended or expelled during the 2015-2016 school year. Most of these suspensions were for non-violent student behaviors.
 - A review of the data suggests that a majority of these suspensions and expulsions were for nonviolent and non-safety-related incidents. With our growing awareness of the impact of trauma, we are compelled to find alternatives that reduce disciplinary actions that remove students from the classroom.
 - Restorative Practices: “The widespread overuse of suspensions and expulsions has tremendous costs. Students who are suspended or expelled from school may be unsupervised during daytime hours and cannot benefit from great teaching, positive peer interactions, and adult mentorship offered in class and in school. Suspending students also often fails to help them develop the skills and strategies they need to improve their behavior and avoid future problems. Suspended students are less likely to graduate on time and more likely to be suspended again, repeat a grade, drop out of school, and become involved in the juvenile justice system.” (US Department of Education 2014)

Recommendation: Student Health

To ensure the physical and mental health needs of all students in all schools are addressed, students enrolled in public education will have direct access to school nursing/health and counseling services.

Rationale

- Universal school access to nursing and counseling services
 - We know that in order to learn, a student must first be healthy and safe. Despite this understanding, the physical and mental health needs of too many students go unaddressed in our schools.
 - Healthy students are better learners and academic achievement bears a lifetime of benefits for health.
 - School health services and counseling, psychological and social services are part of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model (WSCC) which promotes a collaborative approach designed to improve learning and health in our nation’s schools.
 - School nurses, school counselors and other professionals play a key role in providing services and coordinating care by communicating with families and health care providers outside of the school setting. Unfortunately, not all students in all schools have the benefit of access to these professionals and the critical services they provide.
- Nurses
 - Traditionally, the school nursing role was designed to support educational achievement by promoting student attendance. Over the past century, the role of the school nurse has expanded to include critical components, such as surveillance, chronic disease management, emergency preparedness, behavioral health assessment, ongoing health education, extensive case management, and much more. Although the position has taken on a more comprehensive approach, the core focus of keeping students healthy and in school remains unchanged.



- o Nationally:
 - 6% of children missed 11 or more days of school in the past 12 months due to illness or injury.
 - 13% to 18 % of children and adolescents have some sort of chronic health condition.
 - Seven million, or 9.4% of all children have asthma.
 - 8% of all children have a food allergy, with almost 40% of them having a history of a severe reaction.
 - It is estimated that at least twenty percent of Alaska school children do NOT have a school nurse to provide health services in their schools. At least another 10% percent have less than the absolute minimum level of services as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and Healthy People 2020. Only 18.2% of secondary schools in Alaska have a full-time registered nurse, compared to 43.9% nation-wide. (2012 CDC School Profiles Survey for Alaska)
- School Counselors
 - o School counselors serve as a first line of defense in identifying and addressing student social/emotional/mental health needs within the school setting. They provide education, prevention, and crisis and short-term intervention until the student is connected with available community resources. Students' unmet mental health needs can be a significant obstacle to student academic achievement, career and social/emotional development and even compromise school safety. Schools are often one of the first places where mental health crises and needs of students are recognized and initially addressed.
 - o 20% of students are in need of mental health services, yet only 1 out of 5 of these students receive the necessary services.
 - o In Alaska, 33.6% to 44.6% high school students reported feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some of their usual activities.
 - o Alaska's overall suicide rate is almost twice the national average—currently Alaska's rate is the highest in the nation. In 2015, suicide was the leading cause of death for people ages 14-19.
 - o Of school-age children who receive any behavioral and mental health services, 70%–80% receive them at school.
 - o 31% of Alaska school districts do not have school counselors & 36% of Alaska schools do not have access to school counseling services.



Example Action Plan: Cultivate Safety and Well-Being

Strategic Priority	Goals/Outcomes			Connections
	Awareness	Transition	Implementation	
Promote Safety and Well-Being	Inventory districts and supporting organizations for: 1) Trauma-engaged practices 2) School climate models 3) Innovative practices for delivering nursing/counseling services Consult with districts innovating with school climate and trauma-engaged practices to establish exemplars for statewide distribution. Institute statewide awareness campaign on ACEs, their impact on learning, and the need for expanded access to student health services to achieve safety and well-being for all students.	Provide professional learning opportunities that create a paradigm shift in thinking and practices to bolster student and staff resiliency. Create statewide resources and strengthen partnerships to improve school climate, student health, and implement trauma-engaged practices. Encourage school-level needs assessments.	Work with stakeholders to update and align statutes, regulations, and policies to support universal implementation. Coordinate efforts to ensure the physical and mental health needs of all students are equitably provided in every school. All students feel welcome and indispensable to their school and community. All schools have positive school climates with robust community engagement. All schools provide direct access to counseling and health services.	Every Student Succeeds Act Title Program contributions: Title I • Foster Care • Neglected & Delinquent (p. 62) • McKinney-Vento Act (Homeless) (p. 81) • School Conditions (p. 54) Title IV Part A Student Supports and Academic Enrichment Grants (ESSA p. 75) State Partnerships: • Suicide Prevention • Alternative School Initiative • School Health Collaborative • Opioid School Prevention Team • Alaska Safe Children's Act • Emergency Preparedness DEED eLearning Program Other Federal Programming (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) • Project AWARE (5yr grant) (School-based mental health counseling, and Youth Mental Health First Aid)



Promising Practices and Examples

- **Signs of Suicide:** [Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools](#), [Petersburg Borough Schools](#)
- **Sources of Strength:** [Juneau Borough Schools](#)
- **Restorative Practices:** [Sitka Borough Schools](#), [Juneau Borough Schools](#)
- **Trauma Engaged Schools:** [Mat-Su Borough Schools](#), [Juneau Borough Schools](#), [Anchorage Schools](#)
- **Social Emotional Learning:** [Anchorage Schools](#), [Mat-Su Borough Schools](#)
- **Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions:** [North Slope Borough Schools](#), [Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools](#), [Petersburg Borough Schools](#)
- **Youth Mental Health First Aid:** [Anchorage Schools](#), [Mat-Su Borough Schools](#), [Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools](#)
- **Youth Leaders:** [Bering Strait Schools](#), [Lower Yukon Schools](#), [Northwest Arctic Borough Schools](#)
- **School Climate Plan:** [Colony Middle School](#)



Glossary

Key Term	Definition
Alaska's Education Challenge	Alaska's Education Challenge is a comprehensive analysis and reconsideration of our system of public education. Following the State Board's development of five strategic priorities aimed at improving Alaska's public education system, Governor Bill Walker, in his 2017 State of the State address, spoke of his forthcoming plan to improve public education in Alaska. In April, Commissioner Johnson and the State Board formally kicked off the Alaska's Education Challenge.
Commitment	Through the recommendations of the five committees, Alaskans made clear there are three primary commitments we expect to make for Alaska's students. Alaskans are making a commitment to (1) Increase Student Success, (2) Cultivate Safety and Well-Being, and (3) Support Responsible and Reflective Learners. All 13 recommendations are color coded in the report based on these commitments.
Committee	Five committees were formed around the State Board's five strategic priorities for improving Alaska's public education system. Each committee was co-chaired by members of the State Board and facilitated by a recognized Alaska education leader. Each committee consisted of no more than 20 stakeholders and included diverse representation from education stakeholders and the education community. Each committee included parents, students, educators, legislators, tribal representatives, and educational partners. The Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) reached out to stakeholder associations and school districts to nominate Alaskans to serve on the committees.
State Board	The State Board is appointed by the Governor. The nine-member board includes a military advisory member and a student advisory member.
Strategic Priority	In September 2016, Education Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson and the State Board established five strategic priorities aimed at improving public education for all students in Alaska. They are: (1) Amplify Student Learning, (2) Ensure Excellent Educators, (3) Modernize the Education System, (4) Inspire Tribal & Community Ownership of Educational Excellence, and (5) Promote Safety & Well-Being.



Appendix

Committee Membership Lists

Student Learning Committee

Committee Member	Position	District/Organization	Committee Seat
Sue Hull	First Vice Chair	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
Barbara Thompson	Member	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
Daisy Katcheak		Bering Strait School District	Parent
Chad Parsons		Nenana City School District	Parent
Mandy Mallott		Juneau School District	Parent
Mary Suminski		Sitka School District	Parent
Sandy Shroyer-Beaver		Northwest Arctic Borough School District	Parent
Ivy Spohnholz	State Representative	District 16/House Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Harriet Drummond	State Representative	District 18/House Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
John Coghill	State Senator	District B/Senate Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Penny Vadla	School Board Member	Kenai School Board	Association of Alaska School Boards
Deena Bishop	Superintendent	Anchorage School District	Alaska Superintendents Association
Amy Jo Meiners	Teacher	Juneau School District	NEA-Alaska
Andy Teuber	President/CEO	Kodiak Area Native Association	Tribal Representative
Wilfried Zibell	State Board of Education Student Advisor	Alaska Association of Student Governments	Alaska Association of Student Governments
Marcia Olson	Education Specialist/CTE Coordinator	Department of Labor & Workforce Development	Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Jon Clouse	Federal Programs Manager	Southwest Region School District	Career & Technical Education
April Blevins	Early Childhood Coordinator/Migrant Education Specialist	Lower Kuskokwim School District	Early Learning
Lori Roth	Student Services Director	North Slope Borough School District	Special Education
Nicole Schuh	Executive Director, Alaska Business Week	Alaska Chamber	Alaska Chamber
Kim Bautista	Principal	Anchorage School District	Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals

Facilitator: Nancy Norman, Education Consultant



Educator Excellence Committee

Committee Member	Position	District/Organization	Committee Seat
Rebecca Himschoot	Member	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
John Harmon	Second Vice Chair	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
Erica Nelson		Northwest Arctic Borough School District	Parent
Wendy Kolberg		Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District	Parent
Jessica Weiler		Yukon-Koyukuk School District	Parent
Gary Stevens	State Senator	District P/Senate Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Justin Parish	State Representative	District 34/House Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Tam Agosti-Gisler	School Board Member	Anchorage School Board	Association of Alaska School Boards
Sean Dusek	Superintendent	Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	Alaska Superintendents Association
Tammy Smith	Teacher	NEA-Alaska	NEA-Alaska
Yatibaey Evans	Director, Alaska Native Education Program	Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	Tribal Representative
Joe Nelson	Chair	Sealaska Board of Directors	Tribal Representative
Brian Conwell	Student	Alaska Association of Student Governments	Alaska Association of Student Governments
Richard Caulfield	Chancellor	University of Alaska Southeast	University of Alaska
Steve Atwater	Interim Dean	University of Alaska Fairbanks	University of Alaska
Posie Boggs		Literate Nation Alaska Coalition	Literate National Alaska Coalition
Sheryl Weinberg	Executive Director	Alaska's Educational Resource Center (SERRC)	Alaska's Educational Resource Center (SERRC)
Kathy Blanc	Program Administrator	Alaska Staff Development Network	Alaska Staff Development Network
Dan Carstens	Principal	Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals
John Sedor	Attorney	Sedor Wendlandt Evans & Filippi, LLC	Education Attorney
Betty Walters		Alaska Statewide Mentor Project	Alaska Statewide Mentor Project

Facilitator: Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady, [Alaska Council of School Administrators](#)



Modernization & Finance Committee

Committee Member	Position	District/Organization	Committee Seat
James Fields	Chair	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
Sue Hull	First Vice Chair	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
Lee Butterfield		Anchorage School District	Parent
Bianca Rogers		Yukon-Koyukuk School District	Parent
Lou Pondolfino		Anchorage School District	Parent
Cheryl Frasca	Executive Director	Education Matters, Inc.	Education Matters, Inc.
Shelley Hughes	State Senator	District F/Senate Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Jennifer Johnston	State Representative	District 28/House Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Katrina Church-Chmielowski	School Board Member	Copper River School Board	Association of Alaska School Boards
Karen Gaborik	Superintendent	Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	Alaska Superintendents Association
Jessica Cook	Teacher	NEA-Alaska	NEA-Alaska
Edward Alexander	Education Manager	Tanana Chiefs Conference	Tribal Representative
Pearl Brower	President	Iliisagvik College	Tribal Representative
Charles Michael	State Board of Education Student Advisor-Elect	Alaska Association of Student Governments	Alaska Association of Student Governments
Michael Partlow	Budget Analyst	Office of Management and Budget	Office of Management and Budget
Luke Fulp	Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations	Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District	Alaska Association of School Business Officials
Tammy Van Wyhe	Superintendent	Copper River School District	Education Technology
Alexei Painter	Fiscal Analyst	Alaska Legislative Finance Division	Alaska Legislative Finance Division
Tim Navarre	Council Member	City of Kenai	Alaska Municipal League
Rick Luthi	Principal	Bristol Bay Borough School District	Principal

Facilitator: Bob Whicker, [Association of Alaska School Boards](#)



Tribal & Community Ownership Committee

Committee Member	Position	District/Organization	Committee Seat
Kenny Gallahorn	Member	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
John Harmon	Second Vice Chair	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
LTC Jason Toole	Military Advisor	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
Kathy Commack		Bering Strait School District	Parent
Jerilyn Kelly		Lower Kuskokwim School District	Parent
Rachel Roy		Sitka School District	Parent
Janet Bifelt		Yukon-Koyukuk School District	Parent
Tom Begich	State Senator	District J/Senate Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Zach Fansler	State Representative	District 38/House Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Chuck Kopp	State Representative	District 24/House Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Tiffany Jackson	School Board Member	Aleutians East School Board	Association of Alaska School Boards
Kerry Boyd	Superintendent	Yukon-Koyukuk School District	Alaska Superintendents Association
Tim Parker	President	NEA-Alaska	NEA-Alaska
Steve Ginnis	Executive Director	Fairbanks Native Association	Tribal Representative
Melanie Bahnke	President/CEO	Kawerak, Inc.	Tribal Representative
Hunter Carter	Student	Alaska Association of Student Governments	Alaska Association of Student Governments
Valerie Davidson	Commissioner	Department of Health & Social Services	Department of Health and Social Services
Kathie Wasserman	Executive Director	Alaska Municipal League	Alaska Municipal League
Deena Mitchell		Great Alaska Schools	Great Alaska Schools
Liz Medicine Crow	President	First Alaskans Institute	First Alaskans Institute

Facilitators: Timi Tullis and Norm Wooten, [Association of Alaska School Boards](#)



Safety & Well-Being Committee

Committee Member	Position	District/Organization	Committee Seat
James Fields	Chair	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
Keith Hamilton	Member	State Board of Education	Committee Co-Chair
Ishmael Andrew		Lower Kuskokwim School District	Parent
Leona Starr		Yukon-Koyukuk School District	Parent
Lily Hinze		Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District	Parent
Jennifer Hall Jones		Anchorage School District	Parent
Cathy Giessel	State Senator	District N/Senate Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
David Talerico	State Representative	District 6/House Education Committee	Alaska State Legislature
Peter Hoepfner	School Board Member	Cordova School Board	Association of Alaska School Boards
Norma Holmgaard	Superintendent	Kashunamiut School District	Alaska Superintendents Association
Laura Mulgrew	Teacher	Juneau School District	NEA-Alaska
Lillian Bannerman	Student	Alaska Association of Student Governments	Alaska Association of Student Governments
Marcey Bish	Child Care Program Manager/ CCDF State Administrator	Department of Health & Social Services	Department of Health and Social Services
Walt Monegan	Commissioner	Department of Public Safety	Department of Public Safety
Dean Williams	Commissioner	Department of Corrections	Department of Corrections
Mary McMahon	Principal	Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District	Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals
Sarah Sledge	Executive Director	Coalition for Education Equity	Coalition for Education Equity
Maureen Hall	School Nurse	Alaska School Nurses Association	School Nurse
Jeff Lansing	Principal	Delta/Greely School District	School Counselor

Facilitator: Sana Efird, [Alaska Department of Education & Early Development](#)



Letters of Support



November 16, 2017

Mr. James K. Fields, Chairman Alaska State Board of Education
Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner
Alaska Dept. of Education & Early Development
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
PO Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500

Dear Chair Fields and Commissioner Johnson:

As principals across the state, we were intensely interested when you initiated Alaska's Education Challenge. We agreed with the five priorities identified by the State Board of Education to Improve Student Learning, Ensure Excellent Educators, Modernize the Education System, Inspire Tribal and Community Ownership, and Promote Safety and Well-being. We note that we believe we have to tackle these challenges in concert, to ensure that each of them are improved. We appreciate that you have included principals in this process.

Our members grapple with Alaska's unique challenges every day. We see how each part of the system is needed to make sure each student has an equal opportunity to learn and succeed. We work every single day to make sure our public schools are a safe place of learning for every student. We offer you our broad understanding of what is needed to close achievement gaps and improve the quality of education across Alaska.

Principals across Alaska have supported the Education Challenge process and look forward to collaborating in the next steps of implementing the ideas that came forward in a way that dovetails with the reality of leading our staffs and communities into the process of improvement. We offer our assistance to you with making the most of this opportunity.

Our members from every school in the state are ready to work with you to meet the education challenges of today across Alaska. Thank you for your leadership.

With sincere support,

Dan Carstens
AASSP President

Deanna Beck
AAESP/ACSA President-Elect





234 Gold Street · Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: (907) 586-9702 · Fax: (907) 586-5879
Website: www.alaskaacsa.org

Alaska Council of School Administrators

November 16, 2017

Mr. James K. Fields, Chairman Alaska State Board of Education
Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner
Alaska Dept. of Education & Early Development
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
PO Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500

Dear Chairman Fields and Commissioner Johnson:

Leadership, Unity & Advocacy for Public Education is the mission of the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA). As you know, ACSA is a professional organization committed to providing leadership for and promotion of a collective professional voice in setting the educational agenda for Alaska. ACSA comprises professional educational leaders of Alaska's schools and school systems. Members include superintendents and other central office administrators, elementary and secondary principals, school business officials. ACSA is also proud to administer the Alaska Staff Development Network (ASDN), Alaska's premier long-standing and highly regarded professional learning resource.

We were excited to join you at the start of Alaska's Education Challenge, the most comprehensive effort the state has undertaken to improve Alaska's system of public education. Our challenges are unique, and so are our opportunities. What is not widely recognized today is that 'schools' do comprise a system, where each component is needed to meet the ultimate objective of providing every student equal opportunities to learn and succeed.

Every day public schools strive to provide our students with a safe place of learning. As we worked to gather input, we focused on including all stakeholders. The process helped broaden our understanding of what is needed to close achievement gaps and improve the quality of education across Alaska.

ACSA has supported this process from the beginning. We also support the next steps to work with implementing the ideas that came forward. As we work to continuously improve our system, we need to continue to collaborate making sure that all five of the priorities for Alaska's public education system are implemented in concert, from improving student learning to ensuring excellent educators, modernizing the education system, inspiring tribal and community ownership, all while promoting safety and well-being.

Our Executive Director, Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady and our members across every school in the state are ready to work with you to meet the education challenges we face in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Mary McMahon
ACSA President



Alaska Superintendents Association

234 Gold St. • Juneau, AK 99801-1101

Phone: (907) 586-9702 / (800) 478-9702 • Fax: (907) 586-5879



November 16, 2017

James Fields, Chairman Alaska State Board of Education

Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner

Alaska Dept. of Education & Early Development

801 West 10th Street, Suite 200

PO Box 110500

Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500

Dear Chair Fields and Commissioner Johnson:

Let me begin with recognition of your leadership in initiating Alaska's Education Challenge. As you identified at the outset, Alaska's schools and students face a range of circumstances unique in the United States.

Throughout the process of gathering public input, the Department of Education and Early Development and the State Board of Education have focused on including all stakeholders. We appreciate that you specifically sought superintendents to serve on each Education Challenge Committee. Together, we have a deep understanding of what is needed to close achievement gaps and improve the quality of education in our schools and opportunities.

The Alaska Superintendents Association (ASA) supports this process and many of the good ideas that have been generated from this effort. Change is a continuous process, and as we move forward together, we look forward to collaborating with the important work to come across all of the five priorities for Alaska's public education system: Improve Student Learning, Ensure Excellent Educators, Modernize the Education System, Inspire Tribal and Community Ownership, and Promote Safety and Well-being. Each of these priorities must be inter-woven into the whole to ensure the overall success of our Alaskan students.

Please feel free to call on us in the implementation process, we stand ready to assist. Our Executive Director, Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady, will help coordinate and facilitate with you across our membership to ensure that together we meet the education challenges of today.

Cordially,

Dr. Karen Gaborik, President

Alaska Superintendents Association





November 27, 2017

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
PO Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500

To Michael Johnson,

I want to thank you and the department for the opportunity to contribute to the Alaska Education Challenge, the proposed Every Student Succeeds Act plan, and the continued work by DEED to lead Alaska's education system to a coherent consensus around student learning.

NEA-Alaska represents 13,000 educators from across the state. We have appreciated the high level of involvement that DEED has created with our membership. Your leadership, as commissioner, has been instrumental in making this happen. We are confident that we can continue to work with DEED and other leading education groups to find ways to improve Alaska's schools.

In many ways, the work of the Alaska Education Challenge and the positive implementation of ESSA in Alaska's schools is at square one. We have laid a solid framework for success by working together. We have every confidence that we will continue to work together to achieve our shared goal of an excellent public education for every child in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Tim Parker
NEA-Alaska president



First Alaskans Institute

State Board of Education
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
PO Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500

To whom it may concern:

"... schools for Alaska Natives are like a meal laced with an unintended, poisonous effect. Along with the promise of preparing us for the future was this poisonous idea... that our Native cultures, our ways of life, our languages, our traditions, our ideas, our understandings of the world, the very societies that were keys to living here for thousands of years, should be stripped from the minds of our children in order to prepare them for a future that will not include Alaska Native cultures. We live with the consequences of this to the present day, and we see the after-effects reverberating through our communities."
— Paul Ongtooguk (Iñupiaq), Alaska Native Education Summit, 2001

The transference of rich cultural knowledge systems that have existed for millennia was violently disrupted with the imposition of Western education through boarding and mission schools beginning in the 1880's and continuing throughout most of the 1900's. Tremendous investments of time and resources (both human and financial) were expended to assimilate Native children throughout this era, and the after-effects continue to manifest today through high dropout rates, negative academic statistics and other social challenges our communities face. Our families, communities and the educators working with them struggle to help our Native students overcome intergenerational traumas associated with this time in order to prepare our children to succeed in school and life.

The history of education within Alaska is a shameful one, but doesn't have to continue to be.

A true transformation of the system is critical to reverse the harms that have been inflicted on Native peoples, and to light a path to a richer educational experience that will benefit all Alaskans. While it is terrible that the basic respect of tribal authority and governance represents a paradigm shift within Alaska, we appreciate the work this Administration has done to begin changing this. This movement toward meaningful government-to-government collaboration and partnership is an important step in the right direction, and will be critical to the success of our shared vision to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our communities and realize better education outcomes for students.

In this spirit, First Alaskans Institute - a member of the Tribal & Community Ownership Committee - fully supports the Alaska Education Challenge. We will continue to help advance the option for self-governance compacting for the delivery of education between the State of Alaska and Tribes or tribally-empowered Alaska Native organizations. This will allow for the tribes and/or tribally-empowered Alaska Native organizations to exercise their authority, design and prioritize education systems that work for them, and in partnership with the State to assume responsibilities and associated funding to carry out programs, services, and activities that the State of Alaska would otherwise be obligated to provide.

It is clear that Alaska must be prepared to do transformative work on our education system if we really want better outcomes for our children and this state, to do otherwise is to co-sign what we already have and I think we all agree, that is not acceptable. The option for Tribes and the State of Alaska to enter into compacts for the provision of education reflects wisdom to amplify the power of these two sovereigns for better outcomes for all of Alaska's children. We look forward to working in partnership with these efforts to transition to a transformed education system that includes the knowledge, strengths, and cultural fortitude of the peoples of this land.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth La quen néay Medicine Crow, Haida/Tlingit
President/CEO

Joie Ayyu Paoli, Inupiaq
Vice President/Indigenous Operations Director

Founding Board

William L. (Igagruk) Hensley
Inupiaq

Roy M. Huhndorf
Yup'ik

Julie E. Kika
Chugach Eskimo

Sam Kilo, Jr.
Tlingit

Janie Leask
Haida-Tsimshian

Oliver Leavitt
Inupiaq

Albert Kookesh
Tlingit

Byron I. Mallott
Tlingit

Morris Thompson
Athabaskan

Mission

True to identity, heritage, and values, Alaska Natives are informed and engaged in leading the decisions that shape the future.



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Good Afternoon Members of the Alaska State Board of Education,

The Association of Alaska School Boards has been heavily involved in Alaska's Education Challenge. We have provided facilitators for two committees (Modernization & Finance and Tribal & Community Ownership) as well as providing outreach through our publication, *Commentary*, to publicize the efforts of the Challenge. We provided recommendations for a school board member to serve on each committee. Additionally we provided staff as content specialists for several committees.

We have frequently stated that Alaska's children only have one opportunity for a K-12 education so it was with a sense of urgency that we agreed to participate in Alaska's Education Challenge. If we fail to provide an excellent education for every child everyday then we have failed our responsibility as education providers.

As we have participated in the process from the beginning it has been exciting to see the transformational recommendations made by the committees and to envision what it might mean for our students and the state of Alaska.

AASB's Board of Directors and staff fully support the committee recommendations and offer our continued support for Alaska's Education Challenge. We are honored to be a partner and commend the Governor, the Alaska State Board of Education, and the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development for their decision to create a better educational experience for our students.



Michael Swain, President



Norman D. Wooten, Executive Director



How DEED Can Support Implementation of the Recommendations

In October 2017, five committees presented 13 recommendations to the State Board of Education. The recommendations were comprehensive and connected. DEED staff reviewed the recommendations and created an inward-focusing graphic that identifies and organizes the overlapping ideas based on where the work would best fit within the department. Many of the recommendations overlap across divisions, DEED as a whole, as well as with stakeholders. This overlap provides the opportunity to continue the collaborative work that built these recommendations, which will be required to accomplish the work.

DEED is comprised of three K-12 divisions that have a specific focus. The Division of Student Learning is responsible for academic standards, statewide assessments, and federal programs. The Division of Educator and School Excellence is responsible for educator professional development, teacher certification, school improvement efforts, and student health and well-being. The Division of Finance and Support Services is responsible for providing services and support to districts through funding, facilities, and child nutrition.



Effective planning and facilitation of this work will benefit from a variety of voices with a broad range of experience.

