



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Education
& Early Development

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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April 14, 2025

The Honorable Rebecca Himschoot
Co-Chair, House Education Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 411
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Andi Story
Co-Chair, House Education Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 403
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representatives Himschoot and Story,

This letter serves as a response to questions addressed to the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) at the Monday, April 7, 2025, House Education Committee meeting regarding the presentation on Special Education.

1. Provide the current enrollment for the School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Include the number of students not from the Anchorage area.

The following table shows the total number of students enrolled in the School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. There are 19 students from the Anchorage area with six students from neighboring communities. There are no students enrolled who reside in rural Alaska.

Student Home City	Count
Eagle River	*
Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER)	*
Palmer	*
Anchorage	19
Total Students	25
*Counts of less than five are suppressed	

2. Provide a report of the vacancies of certificated personnel employed within the state who work with students with disabilities.

Job Code	Vacancies	Job Name
11	48	Counselor
13	2	Remedial Specialist
21	107	Special Education (SPED) Teacher
24	6	Psychologist
25	1	Psychometrist
26	23	Speech Therapist
27	2	Physical Therapist
28	13	Occupation Therapist
29	1	Audiologist
33	1	Orientation and Mobility Specialist

The data highlights critical shortages across various special education-related professions on the first day report. The most significant shortfall is seen in the role of Special Education Teachers (Job Code 21) indicating a pressing need for qualified educators to support students with disabilities.

3. Provide the number of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder for the last five years.

The following table includes information from the Fall OASIS data collection regarding students identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder for the past five years.

Special Education Child Count by District - Ages 3-21	
School Year	Autism Spectrum Disorder
2019-2020	1,687
2020-2021	1,702
2021-2022	1,774
2022-2023	1,903
2023-2024	2,089

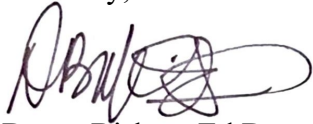
4. Provide the percentage of the student population that have an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

School Year	Total Enrollment	Total Special Education Students	Percent Special Education Students
2024-2025 (preliminary)	129,903	20,463	15.75%
2023-2024	131,264	20,263	15.44%
2022-2023	131,212	19,368	14.76%
2021-2022	130,442	18,966	14.54%
2020-2021	130,394	18,941	14.53%

Final numbers for the 2024-2025 school year will be available in May 2025, once all of the intensive funding claims are reviewed.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Deena Bishop', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Deena Bishop, Ed.D.
Commissioner

cc: Jordan Shilling, Director, Governor's Legislative Office