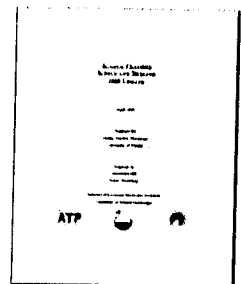




Chatham	26%	22	6	Nenana	27%	26	7
Chugach	25%	14	4	Nome	23%	52	12
Copper River	14%	42	6	North Slope	21%	186	39
Cordova	18%	35	6	Northwest Arctic	26%	158	41
Craig	21%	31	7	Pelican	50%	4	2
Delta Greely	19%	52	10	Petersburg	10%	47	5
Denali	27%	29	8	Pribilof	34%	12	4
Dillingham	29%	40	12	Saint Marys	38%	13	5
Fairbanks	10%	917	92	Sitka	11%	110	12
Galena	14%	57	8	Skagway	21%	13	3
Haines	17%	31	5	Southeast Island	30%	13	4
Hoonah	16%	21	3	Southwest Region	31%	66	20
Hydaburg	41%	10	4	Tanana	46%	7	3
Iditarod	48%	36	17	Unalaska	13%	18	2
Juneau	13%	343	45	Valdez	12%	60	7
Kake	22%	15	3	Wrangell	13%	33	4
Kashunamiut	20%	23	5	Yakutat	31%	17	5
Kenai	12%	633	76	Yukon Flats	35%	37	37
Kelchikan	11%	145	16	Yukon Koyukuk	38%	30	11
Klawock	21%	10	2	Yupit	30%	21	6
<b>Alaska Average</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>8,076</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>Note: Latest data is from 4 school years ago.</b>			

## 2005 Supply & Demand Update



Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP) has contracted with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) between 2005 and 2007 to identify and analyze trends in K-12 educator supply and demand in the State of Alaska, including teacher turnover rates.

This report is an analysis of Alaskan teacher supply and turnover data from 1999-2004, and projects supply and demand data for the next five years.

## Is There a Teacher Shortage?

Concern has been expressed in recent years about a potential shortage of qualified teachers for the nation's schools. A number of factors are seen as contributing to shortfalls: Student enrollment is growing, the teaching corps is aging, and many teachers are nearing retirement age. Finding enough qualified teachers has been a problem for many schools and districts around the country, especially in Alaska. Often this difficulty has been seen as evidence of a national shortfall in qualified educators.

However, the United States does not have an overall shortage of teachers. Indeed, nationally, more teachers are trained than are needed on an annual basis. Nonetheless, there is a lopsided distribution of educators, both in terms of the geographic location of available teachers and in the numbers of teachers trained in particular fields. For example, there are shortages of teachers in specific subject areas, including special education, mathematics, and science (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

Still, retaining current teachers, rather than training new ones, is the larger problem nationally. Ingersoll (2003a, 2003b) found that increasing student enrollment and teacher retirements due to an aging workforce are not the primary causes of teacher shortages. Rather, the major factor driving teacher shortages is teacher turnover, both from educators migrating to new positions and from those leaving the teaching profession altogether, prior to retirement age. Studies have found that between 40 and 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years of their teaching career (Ingersoll and Kralik, 2004).

## Factors in Teacher Turnover

The primary reasons for educator dissatisfaction (in national studies) were poor salaries, poor administrative support, and student discipline problems.

While these studies offer important findings, they do not fully address the unique circumstances in Alaska that contribute to teacher turnover. For instance:

- Many schools in Alaska are in remote locations accessible only by plane or boat, so access can be both expensive and difficult.
- Housing availability and housing costs are often problematic (NANA Pacific, 2004), and in some rural Alaskan communities, teacher housing even lacks water and sewer hookups.

- Health care, shopping options, entertainment, and other "city" amenities can be quite limited.
- Teachers in rural schools are often required to teach multiple subjects across several grade levels.
- Cultural differences can create difficulties, especially for those who come to Alaska from the "lower 48" states. Alaska is home to many Alaska Native cultures; each having distinct languages, belief systems, traditions, and cultural practices, and it can be difficult for non-Native educators to learn how to work effectively within Native communities.

No comprehensive study of teachers who leave their jobs has been conducted in Alaska. However, McDiarmid, et. al., (2002) surveyed a sample of teachers in Alaska (n=135) who left their jobs at the end of the 2000-2001 school year, to try to understand why teachers either changed districts or left the career of teaching entirely.

When asked why they changed districts, the vast majority of teachers cited personal or family reasons (80%). Many also indicated they wanted to reside elsewhere (63%), were dissatisfied with district administrative support (61%), community support of the school (51%) or school board support (45%).

Affordable housing and higher quality housing were also significant concerns (46% and 38%).

Salary was only a concern for 22 percent overall, although teachers moving between urban districts were much more likely to change positions due to salary (50%) than rural educators (14%).

Better medical care was of concern to rural educators (30%) and not at all (0%) for urban teachers changing districts.

When asked to explain why they left teaching completely, subjects cited family or personal reasons (59%), the choice to pursue another career (50%), dissatisfaction with job description or responsibilities (45%), and dissatisfaction with community support of the school (37%). Better salary or benefits were only cited by 21 percent of those leaving the teaching profession. Health issues were another significant reason for teachers' departure (18%).

- Download the Alaska Teacher Supply & Demand Report 2005 in PDF format.

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