



UNIVERSITY  
*of* ALASKA  

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*Many Traditions One Alaska*

**Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools**  
Prepared for the State of Alaska

**In Accordance with:**  
Senate Bill 241 (2008) 25<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session  
Source Chapter No. HCS CSSB 241 (HES)

AN ACT  
Relating to a report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the  
Board of Regents of the University of Alaska

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**Presented by:**  
The University of Alaska Board of Regents  
Regent Cynthia Henry, Chair of the Board  
Regent Patricia "Pat" Jacobson, Chair of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee

On February 18, 2009

## **PURPOSE STATEMENT**

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In 2008, the 25th Alaska State Legislature passed Senate Bill 241. This legislation required the University of Alaska Board of Regents to deliver a report titled “Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools” no later than the 30th legislative day of the first session of each legislature, which for the 26<sup>th</sup> Legislature is on or before February 19, 2009.

## **OVERVIEW**

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The following report describes the efforts the university is making to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers. This report includes information on teacher graduation data; a gap analysis documenting the shortage areas in the teaching workforce; a three to five year plan outlining the university’s priorities to address the gap; and existing efforts to attract, train, and retain school teachers for Alaska.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

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### Teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment at the University of Alaska

- The University of Alaska (UA) on average produces 190 new teachers each year, about half of whom are certified in elementary education, and half in secondary education.
- Teacher recruitment and retention in Alaska is a complex issue not limited to simple solutions that one single entity or agency can resolve; there is no magic bullet.
- The University of Alaska offers a combination of over 120 programs dedicated to K-12 Outreach, including college preparation, professional development, or teacher recruitment and retention.
- To increase the number of Alaska prepared teachers will require more Alaska students going to college. Thus, the University of Alaska has made K-12 Outreach a top priority.

### Alaska’s Teacher Workforce

- 8,902 public school classroom teachers currently work in Alaska.
- Teacher shortage areas in Alaska include special education, mathematics, and science.
- Each year, Alaska school districts hire roughly 900 to 1,100 teachers.
- Roughly 800 to 900 vacant positions are a result of teachers exiting a teaching position.
- The average teacher salary in Alaska is \$56,757.
- In 2010, roughly thirty-four percent (34%) of current teachers will be eligible for retirement.
- Sixty-five percent (65%) of Alaska’s teachers are currently over the age of 40.
- Alaska Native teachers make up six percent (6%) of the teaching workforce.
- Forty-one percent (41%) of special education teachers exit the Alaska school system after four years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Invest in Special Education Teacher Preparation

Invest in growing the special education teacher preparation programs at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Currently, UAF is the only school of education in the university system without a special education program. Funding to support this effort would expand the universities' teacher preparation capacity and provide a new source for teachers in a high-demand area for Alaska.

### Invest in Education Studies and Research for the State of Alaska

Invest in expanding and updating data collection systems, and workforce development studies in education for the State of Alaska. Expanding the universities' capacity to conduct studies and research in education will enable the following:

- Provide valuable ongoing information and data analysis for the standing Senate and House Education Committees, and ensure future reports meet state expectations.
- Support the State Education Plan prepared by the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, including the following goals and activities:

*Collaborate with Alaska's postsecondary institutions to ensure that education-related degree programs and staff development programs reflect research, best practices, Alaska's diverse cultures, and alignment to academic standards, and are sufficient in scale and scope to meet the public school workforce needs.*

*Develop a staff development infrastructure that is collaborative, need-based, research proven, and provides opportunities for continuous growth for new and experienced teachers.<sup>1</sup>*

### Expand Scholarship Opportunities for Education Majors

Expand scholarship opportunities for students in high-demand job areas such as education with specific emphasis on shortage areas. Re-evaluate loan forgiveness programs, and sustain and increase funding for programs that demonstrate efficacy in preparing and supporting teacher recruitment and retention.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (2008) Draft Alaska Education Plan retrieved from: [http://www.eed.state.ak.us/edsummit/pdf/Education\\_Plan\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/edsummit/pdf/Education_Plan_Draft.pdf).

## **TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATION DATA**

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This section of the report includes aggregate data on University of Alaska graduates eligible to enter the K-12 education workforce as licensed teachers, administrators, counselors, or district office administrators. The data reflects three-year trends in graduate rates reported by Academic Year (AY) starting in 2006 and ending in 2008.

## **GAP ANALYSIS: SHORTAGES IN THE TEACHING WORKFORCE**

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The Gap Analysis on the teacher workforce is based on survey data collected from K-12 school administrators. It also includes hiring data for the K-12 education system made available through collaboration between the University of Alaska Anchorage Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), the Alaska Department of Labor (DOL), the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED), and the Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP). It provides a general overview of the K-12 education work and highlights turnover data in specific shortage areas.

## **EFFORTS TO ATTRACT, TRAIN, AND RETAIN QUALIFIED SCHOOL TEACHERS**

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Programs and activities that directly impact K-12 teachers employed in Alaska include professional development, curriculum and resources, mentoring, and research efforts sponsored through the University of Alaska system. This section highlights many of the programs UA offers.

## **THREE TO FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR TEACHER PREPARATION**

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Senate Bill 241 (2008) reads, “*The report must include an outline of the university's current and future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training. The information reported under this subsection may also include short-term and five-year strategies with accompanying fiscal notes and outcome measures.*”<sup>2</sup>

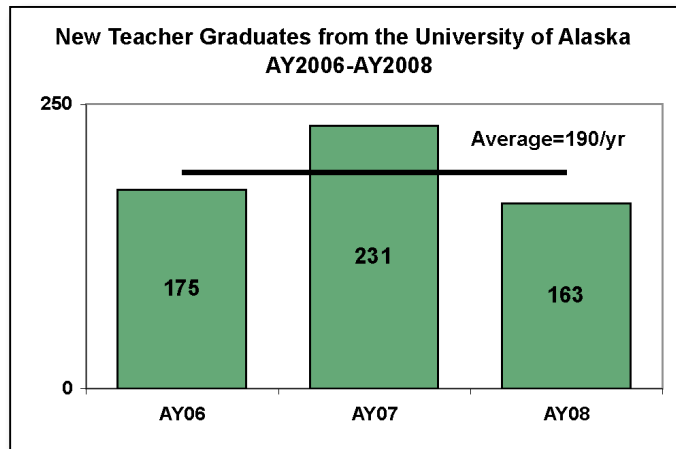
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<sup>2</sup> Source: Sec. 2. AS 14.40.190(b) Laws of Alaska (2008) Source Chapter No. HCS CSSB 241(HES) of the 25<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.

## TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATION DATA

### New Teachers for Alaska

The University of Alaska graduated 175 new teachers in Academic Year (AY) 2006, 231 in AY07, and 163 in AY08. This number reflects bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and licensure degrees in elementary, secondary, and early childhood for the three universities:

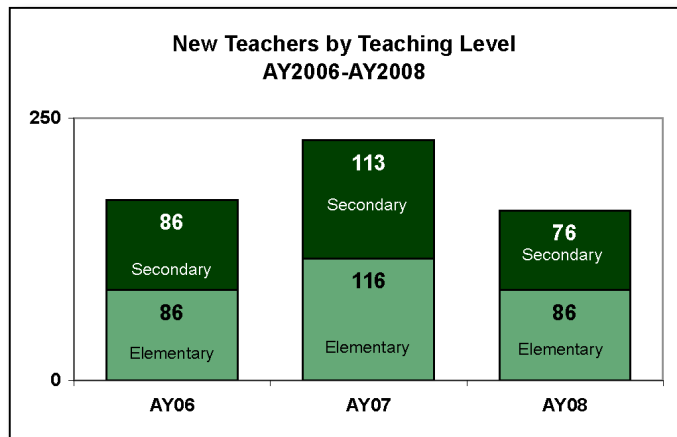


University of Alaska Anchorage, University of Alaska Fairbanks, and University of Alaska Southeast. The increase from AY06 and AY07 reflects a variance due in part to the use of the start and end dates necessary to eliminate duplicate counts of graduates.

The three-year average of 190 graduates per year reflects the most accurate number of graduates eligible to enter the K-12 teacher workforce each year.

Of the teacher graduation count, the total breakdown by grade level shows that annually the University of Alaska graduates slightly more elementary teachers than secondary teachers each year. This trend may be the result of several factors, including that students can earn a bachelor's degree in elementary education in four years. A degree in elementary education is also offered at all three campuses and is available onsite or via distance delivery.

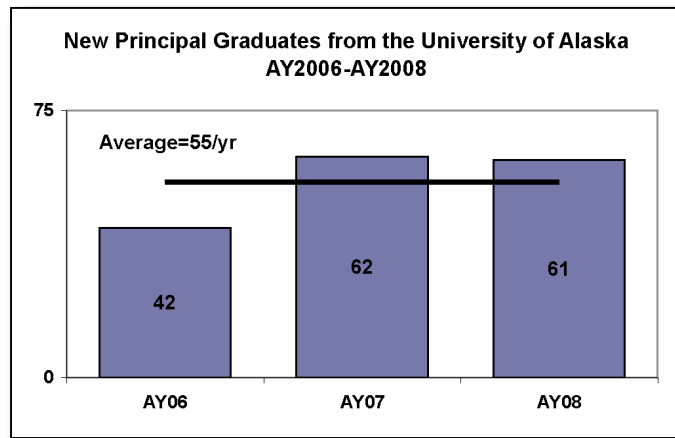
The majority of the secondary degree programs in education typically require five years of college before a student is eligible to teach. Most secondary programs require students to transfer into a master's program with a bachelor's degree in a core content area. Students with advanced degrees in mathematics and science in Alaska have many more employment opportunities in the state compared to a student graduating with a degree in elementary education.



Note: Does not include UA K-12 Art or K-12 Music graduates

### New Principals for Alaska

The University of Alaska graduated 42 new principals in Academic Year (AY) 2006, 62 in AY07, and 61 in AY08. The average number of graduates completing a licensure program for administration is 55. However, not all graduates seek an administrative position following graduation; some continue as classroom teachers, mentors, or pursue district office positions.



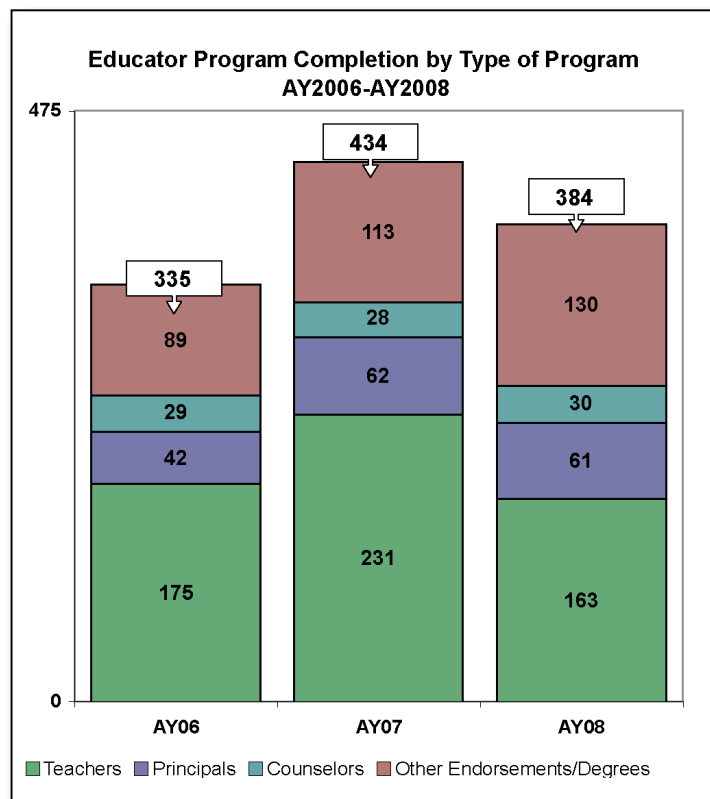
The University of Alaska Anchorage is currently the only campus offering a principal licensure program. The University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau will be launching a new program in 2009. The summer cohort has 20 new applicants, some of whom are former and current Alaska Statewide mentors.

### Other Endorsements & Degree Programs

Each campus offers a variety of endorsement programs that lead to an advanced degree or, in some cases, a certificate of completion. Some of these programs are designed for current teachers who seek to add an endorsement and/or complete a master's degree while also fulfilling requirements for state certification.

The University of Alaska Anchorage offers degree programs in Special Education, Reading, and the state's only Superintendent degree program. UAA also has an affiliated speech language pathology program with East Carolina University (ECU). UAA provides the preparatory coursework via distance delivery to candidates applying to the ECU graduate program to become a speech-language pathologist.

The University of Alaska Southeast Masters of Arts in Teaching prepares teachers statewide, and enrollment in that program has increased 24% between 2006 and 2008. In addition, UAS expect to graduate in AY09 an additional 30 special education teachers.

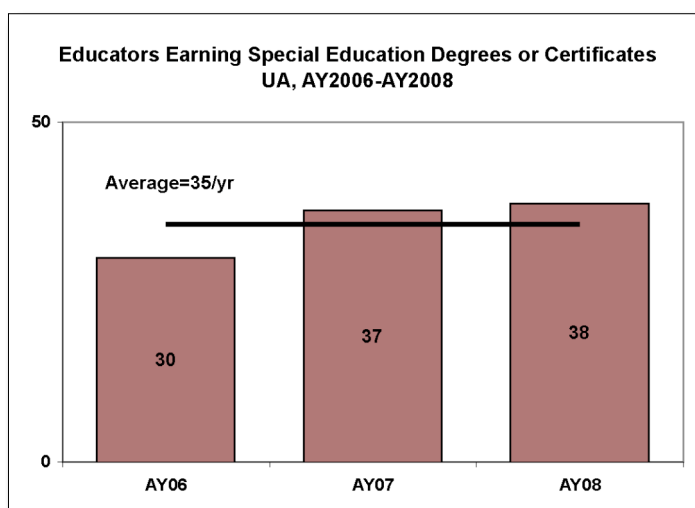


The University of Alaska Fairbanks offers the only terminal degree for educators through the Interdisciplinary Studies Ph.D. program. The UAF Elementary Licensure Program is a post baccalaureate, year-long elementary licensure program. UAF also offers Masters of Education degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, Cross-Cultural Education, Language and Literacy, Guidance and Counseling, and Reading. UAF is seeking to expand their teacher preparation program to include Special Education. The University of Alaska campuses in both Fairbanks and Anchorage offer degrees in Counseling and Guidance. Over the three-year average, collectively they graduate 29 counselors a year.

Over half, fifty-three percent (53%) of the University of Alaska education graduates are new teachers. According to trend data, each year the state of Alaska can expect 190 new teachers prepared to enter the K-12 education teacher workforce. However, not all students enroll in high demand teacher certification areas, nor do all graduates go on to teach after completing a degree in education.

### New Special Education Teachers

The University of Alaska produces an average of 35 special education teachers each year. Special education teachers have a higher rate of turnover compared to other teaching positions; thus, administrators must replace teachers who leave a district or the teaching profession, and replace vacant positions in special education when teachers move from a special education position to a regular classroom teacher position within their district. As a result, special education teachers are in high demand each year. According to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Special Education is also a federally designated teacher shortage area. Additional information is provided in the following sections on special education teacher turnover rates in Alaska. Enrollment in special education programs at UA is growing.



### New Math & Science Teachers

Secondary teaching degrees awarded by the University of Alaska in mathematics and science over the three-year period averages out to 11 mathematics certificates and 24 science certificates a year.

#### **Number of UA Graduates in Mathematics and Science UA, AY2006-AY2008**

	AY06	AY07	AY08	3 Year Average
Mathematics	9	14	9	11
Science	23	35	13	24

\* Data gathered from UA Teacher Preparation programs, not reflected in UA Institutional Research Student Banner data.

## GAP ANALYSIS: SHORTAGES IN THE TEACHING WORKFORCE

### Understanding the Alaska Teaching Workforce

- 8,902 public school classroom teachers currently work in Alaska.
- Teacher shortage areas in Alaska include special education, mathematics, and science.
- Each year, Alaska school districts hire roughly 900 to 1,100 teachers.
- Roughly 800 to 900 vacant positions are a result of teachers exiting the system.
- The average teacher salary in Alaska is \$56,757.
- In 2010, roughly thirty-four percent (34%) of current teachers will be eligible for retirement.
- Sixty-five percent (65%) of Alaska's teachers are currently over the age of 40.
- Alaska Native teachers make up six percent (6%) of the teaching workforce.

Annually, Alaska districts hire roughly 900 to 1,100 teachers for vacant positions in every teaching subject. However, special education and secondary content areas are in disproportionately high-demand. Of the estimated 1,000 new positions, roughly 150-200 reflects

#### Average Number of Teachers by School District Region FY06 to FY08

Number of Teachers by Region	Number of Teachers
Urban	5,580
Southeast	411
Road System/Other	236
Off the Road System/Rural	1,864
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,091</b>

Source: ISER tabulations of DEED Certified Staff Accounts.

Urban: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kenai, Juneau, and Mat-Su

Southeast: All districts from Yakutat to Ketchikan (including Haines and Skagway)

Road System/Other: Denali, Alaska Gateway, Copper River, Delta Greeley, Nenana, and Valdez

Off the Road System/Rural: All other districts, typically accessible only by air

“movers” – teachers who leave one school district for another, rather than exiting the system. Movers are common in Alaska as teachers migrate from district to district. The majority of vacancies are often in rural Alaska, yet the majority of the Alaska teachers live in urban areas.

### The Economics of Education in Alaska

In 1998 the Alaska Department of Labor Economic Trends reported, “*Jobs with local school districts in kindergarten through 12th grade number over 20,000— nearly seven percent of all wage and salary jobs in Alaska. No other industry in Alaska is more ubiquitous than education. Often local education is the single largest employer in a community. In fact, two of the state's 10 largest employers are school districts. In many communities, one of the few employers is the local school district.*”<sup>3</sup>

Further, the report finds education dollars represent economic activity in the state and in all of the communities education is present. Local education spending in Alaska is not only an investment in education but also has immediate economic impacts statewide. Ten years later, the report's findings still hold true, however the analysis needs to be updated to reflect the current economic impact of education accurately.

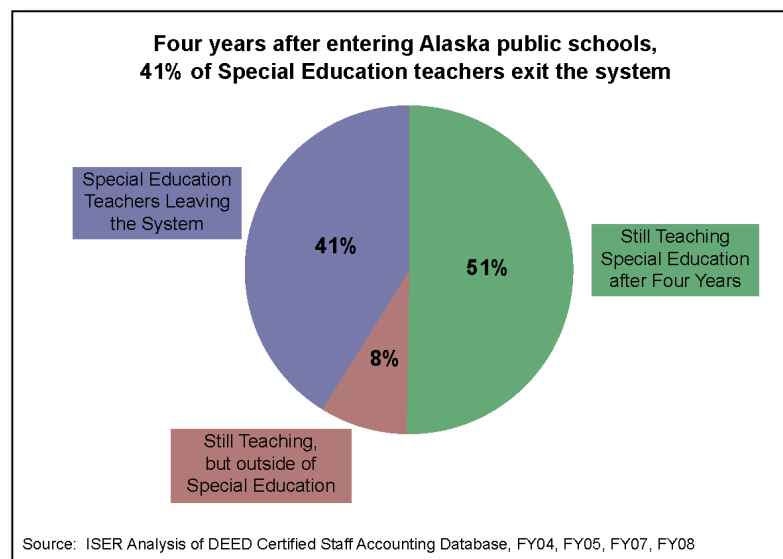
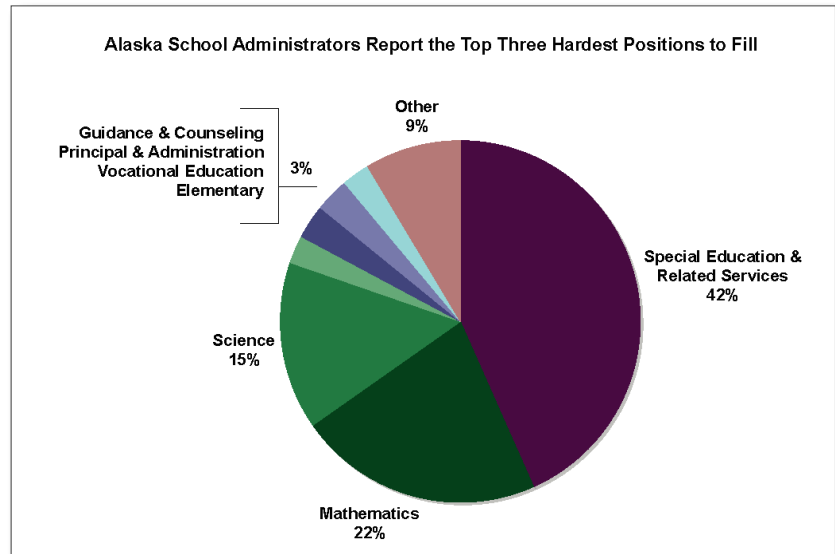
<sup>3</sup> Alaska Economic Trends (1998) Kelm, Diana, Editor Alaska Dept. of Labor. February 1998, Volume 18, Number 2



### Gap Analysis for Special Education, Mathematics, and Science

Special education vacancies are unquestionably the hardest to fill. This trend is equally common on a national level. While the need for special education teachers is not unique to Alaska, teaching in Alaska, especially rural Alaska, remains unique compared to the rest of the United States. In a recent survey conducted by Alaska Teacher Placement (M. Hill, 2008) school administrators reported the hardest K-12 education positions to fill

include special education and related services at forty-two percent (42%) of the total responses, followed by mathematics (22%) and science (15%). Additional studies could be conducted to better understand the complexities of these trends.



According to a recent report by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at UAA, (A. Hill & Hirshberg, 2008) special education teacher turnover is higher compared to statewide turnover. Four years after entering a teaching position, forty-nine percent (49%) of special education teachers were no longer teaching special education, and of those, only eight percent (8%) remained in the Alaska system, but teaching outside of special education. However,

simply producing more teachers in these areas may not address the issue of retention. The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) reported, *“Through grant funding, ASMP has been able to increase focus on mentoring special education teachers by pairing mentors with special education certifications to work with early career special education teachers. Working with a sub-sample of about a third of all new special education teachers, ASMP has retained over 80% each year.”*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Source: Alaska Statewide Mentor Project Research Summary 2004-08, Barbara L. Adams, Ph.D. Fall 2008

The table below shows the average number of teaching positions, vacancies, and filled vacancies from 2006 to 2008 in the following three key shortage areas: special education, mathematics, and science. The average number of new University of Alaska graduates prepared in those fields (last row in the table), coupled with the difference between the average number of new teachers needed and the supply (UA graduates) shows that even if every University of Alaska graduate takes a job with Alaska schools, districts across the state would still need to recruit from outside the state to fill the gap.

### Special Education Gap

After accounting for the teachers who move within the state, districts need to hire about 100 new special educators each year. UA graduates, based on a three year average, account for roughly 35 new special educators each year; – thus, districts need to find at least 64 teachers from outside of Alaska.

### Mathematics Gap

Mathematics shows the greatest percentage gap. Districts need an average of 48 new mathematics teachers each year, and the University of Alaska prepares roughly 11, which equates to one-fourth the number needed.

### Science Gap

The science numbers, aggregated across all science areas, demonstrates the universities' capacity to prepare teachers. Across the state, districts need to hire 41 new science teachers, and the University of Alaska graduates 24. However, Superintendents report their hardest-to-fill fields includes the physical sciences. Again, for a variety of reasons, many outside of the university's sphere of influence, newly prepared teachers might not accept a position after completing a teacher preparation program

<b>Shortage Teacher Assignments in Alaska Average, AY2006-AY2008</b>			
	<b>Special Education</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>
<b>Average Number of Teaching Positions Districts Must Fill</b>			
Total Teacher Positions	1,068	593	494
Filled by:			
Teachers Continuing in their Districts	907	516	432
Alaska Teachers Changing Districts (movers)	63	29	21
<b>Number of New Teachers Needed:</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>41</b>
Filled by:			
Experienced Teachers New to Alaska	47	16	16
New Teachers	51	32	25
<b>The number of University of Alaska Graduates</b>			
<b>Average Number of UA Teacher Graduates</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>

## **EFFORTS TO ATTRACT, TRAIN, AND RETAIN QUALIFIED SCHOOL TEACHERS**

To increase the number of teachers prepared in Alaska, more Alaska students will need to enroll and complete degree programs in education. The University of Alaska has an array of programs and activities designed to support teacher recruitment and retention of K-12 educators. In addition, the university has made K-12 Outreach and Bridging Programs a priority for future operating requests to the legislature. This section lists over 100 programs, activities, and initiatives underway at the university in this area. Expansion of the data collection methods for future reports will include a more comprehensive analysis of these efforts.

### **K-12 Student Outreach and Bridging Efforts**

UA Geography Program National Geographic Society Traveling Maps	UAF
Engineering Career Academy	UAF
Lego Robotics	UAF
Boys Project: Developing group mentoring model for Black adolescents	UAF
History Day at UAF	UAF
Jazz Camp	UAF
Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival	UAF
USA Artists Visiting Artist Residency	UAF
Che'ghutsen Systems of Care	UAF
Alaska Summer Research Academy	UAF
Alaska Statewide High School Science Symposium	UAF
TASK Teaching Alaskans/Sharing Knowledge Professors in the Classroom	UAF
Science Potpourri	UAF
Rural Student Services	UAF
Interior-Aleutians Campus Early College	UAF
Tech Prep	UAF
Upward Bound	UAF
2008 Elders' Academy	UAF
UA Geographic Alliance	UAF
Partnership with Alaska Geographic Association	UAF
UA Geographic Alliance Glacier Girls Program	UAF
UA Geographic Alliance Stories of Culture and Place	UAF
Finance Camp for Middle School & High School	UAF
Shelton Leadership Institute	UAF
TVC Tech-Prep	UAF
TVC Hutchison High School partnership	UAF
Interior Alaska Career Academy at TVC	UAF
Fairbanks Youth Facility TVC career exploration session/yearly	UAF
TVC Workforce Scholarship for Fairbanks Students	UAF
TVC Career Tech Expo	UAF
TVC "brush-up" Math for High School Exit Exam	UAF
TVC & Effie Kokrine Charter School - Early College program	UAF
TVC and Delta Junction Workforce Development TVEP	UAF
RAVE: Rural Alaska Vocational Exploration	UAF
TVC Career Exploration in Diesel/Heavy Equipment	UAF
Explore Alaska Museum	UAF

Geophysical Institute UAF Science Education Outreach Network	UAF
Science for Alaska Lecture Series	UAF
UAF Summer Youth Programs Jump Start	UAF
Fairbanks Suzuki Institute	UAF
Visual Arts Academy	UAF
Earn and Learn	UAF
4-H Statewide: Nome, Mat-Su, Cordova, Kodiak, Anchorage, Eielson and Juneau	UAF
Spanish for Young Adventurers	UAF
Cooperative Extension Summer Youth Activities	UAF
Bristol Bay Campus Natural History of Salmon/Salmon Camp for HS students	UAF
Kuskokwim Campus Educational Talent Search	UAF
Summer Science Field Camps	UAF
Summer KuC Jr. Bridge Sciences STEM	UAF
NW Campus Partnership with Chugach School District Summer EXCEL Camp	UAF
UAF Rural Alaska Honors Institute	UAF
Health Programs	UAF
K-12 Outreach Elementary School, I Know I Can Program & I'm Going to College	UAS
Summer Theatre Arts Rendezvous Program, STAR	UAS
High School Dual Enrollment	UAS
JDHS Career Expo/SERRC Academy/Apprentice Fair/Independent Living	UAS
JDHS Geometry Bridge Math	UAS
Do the Math	UAS
Juneau Science Fair	UAS
Tech Prep	UAS
Alaska Native Early Scholars	UAS
Latseen	UAS
Native Oratory	UAS
Alaska Native Oratory Society, AKNOS	UAA
Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program, ANSEP	UAA
ANSEP Engineering Jump Start	UAA
Undergraduate Research and Scholarship, OURS	UAA
Career Connections	UAA
College Readiness Project	UAA
Disability Support Services, DK-12 Student Outreach Program	UAA
Doyon Foundation Education Summits	UAA
Education Talent Search, ETS	UAA
Engineering Academy	UAA
I'm Going to College	UAA
Native K-12 Student Outreach Program Triple-O Program	UAA
Natives in Early Transition, NET	UAA
Secondary School Student Enrollment	UAA
Tech Prep Program	UAA
Upward Bound	UAA
UAA Preview Days	UAA
Tanana Child Development Center	UAA
Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program Summer Bridge Programs	UAA
Della Keats/UDOC Summer Enrichment Program	UAA

NIDDKD Summer Enrichment Program	UAA
Culinary Boot Camp	UAA
Theater for Young People	UAA
Community Service Arts for Visual Integration and Educational Work, AVIEW	UAA
College Goal Sunday (Systemwide)	UAA
Community Campaign for Title I Schools in Anchorage	UAA
Reading with the Seawolves	UAA
UA I Know I Can and I am Going to College	Systemwide
UA College Savings Plan	Systemwide
February FAFSA Frenzy, FFF Students & Families focus on Financial Aid	Systemwide

### Teacher Professional Development and Educational Resources

Interior Native Educators Cross-Cultural Studies	UAF
National Park Service Cross-Cultural Studies	UAF
Teachers Domain Alaska Cross-Cultural Studies	UAF
Fairbanks School District Theatre/Film Studies	UAF
Fairbanks North Star Borough Office of Public History Teaching American History	UAF
Math Fix	UAF
UA Geographic Alliance	UAF
Partnership with Alaska Geographic Association	UAF
Math in a Cultural Context MCC	UAF
MapTEACH: Mapping Technology Experiences with Alaska's Cultural Heritage	UAF
UA Geographic Alliance Google Earth Collaboration	UAF
UA GeoPortal	UAF
GIS Teacher in-Service	UAF
Alaska in Maps	UAF
Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment, GLOBE	UAF
Future Farmers of America, FFA	UAF
Reindeer Research Program, RRP	UAF
School of Education & Statewide Mentor Collaborative	UAF
School of Education and Fairbanks SD host the State Writing Consortium 2009	UAF
Geophysical Institute UAF Science Education Outreach Network	UAF
Experimental Discoveries in Geoscience Education, EDGE	UAS
Teacher and Counselor Retreat	UAS
UAS School of Education Professional Education Center	UAS
Alaska Educational Innovations Network, AEIN	UAA
Office of Professional and Continuing Education, PACE	UAA
International Polar Year K-12 Outreach Educator Resource Guide	Systemwide
Community and Technical College and Career and Technical Education	Systemwide

### Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Reach to Teach	UAF
Preparing Indigenous Teachers & Administrators for Alaska Schools, PITAAS	UAS
Alaska Statewide Mentor Project	Systemwide
Future Teachers of Alaska	Systemwide
Alaska Teacher Placement, Recruiting Teachers for Today and Tomorrow	Systemwide

### **THREE TO FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR TEACHER PREPARATION**

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The University of Alaska is committed to meeting the workforce needs of Alaska public schools. Producing quality teachers and administrators for Alaska who are likely to remain teaching in Alaska is the primary concern for the Teacher Education Planning Group. Additionally, the Teacher Education Planning Group is tasked with development and implementation of a three-to-five year plan. This group has established the following priorities to be addressed in the UA Teacher Education Statewide Plan for Teacher Preparation. This effort will maximize resources and increase collaborations internally and system-wide. The group has engaged stakeholders in education, industry, and state agencies in this effort. Collaborations are focused around the workforce needs of Alaska.

Senate Bill 241 (2008) states, “*The report must include an outline of the university's current and future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training. The information reported under this subsection may also include short-term and five-year strategies with accompanying fiscal notes and outcome measures.*”<sup>5</sup>

#### Members of the Teacher Education Planning Group

- John Pugh, Chancellor of UAS, Lead
- Melissa Hill, Director of ATP at Statewide Office of Academic Affairs
- Dean Larry Harris, School of Education UAS
- Dean Eric Madsen, School of Education UAF
- Dean Mary Snyder, College of Education UAA

#### Priorities for the Teacher Education Planning Group

The following priorities are to be addressed over the next three to five years under SB241.

1. Expansion of Special Education Teacher Preparation Program
2. Recruitment of New Teacher Through Outreach
3. Program Access Through Distributed Teaching and Learning
4. Focus Efforts in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, STEM
5. Early Childhood Education

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Sec. 2. AS 14.40.190(b) Laws of Alaska (2008) Source Chapter No. HCS CSSB 241(HES) of the 25<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.

1. Special Education

According to data collected through the statewide supply and demand studies and school district administrators, special education is the hardest position to fill and has the highest turnover rate. The Teacher Education group will work collaboratively to implement a cross-MAU endorsement and degree program in special education system-wide offered via distance. Funding for Special Education would provide a faculty member at UAF to ensure that each program has the capacity to support the needs of school districts. UAF is the only campus that does not have a special education program in the school of education. This funding will respond to the highest need identified by former Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District Superintendent Ann Shortt, current Superintendent Nancy Wagner, and virtually all other Alaska superintendents.

2. Recruitment Efforts

It has become apparent schools and colleges of education need to focus more on recruiting students in high-demand jobs as early as intermediate grades to encourage college and high school students to become teachers. Education units need to connect with other departments on campus and with school districts to set up recruitment activities. Each campus may need to look at their existing recruiting resources and engage their enrollment and student services offices in this effort. The MAUs will work collectively to develop a system-wide marketing effort that each of the schools of education would implement.

3. Program Access Through Distributed Teaching and Learning

Serving students in rural areas where the need for teachers is greater due to teacher turnover is a priority for the State and University. Data suggests that teachers trained in their region have a higher retention rate. Providing access to education to students in rural areas will require resources from distance education programs and school districts to build infrastructure to deliver courses and monitor practicum students via distance.

4. STEM Resources

Science and Mathematics are core areas under No Child Left Behind. Additionally, those positions are the second “hardest to fill” according to survey data from K-12 school administrators. Meeting the needs in secondary core content areas will require increased faculty awareness and the capacity to engage STEM colleagues across the campuses in a dialog about ways to produce more STEM teachers. This effort will require the campus administration to enlist the assistance of the appropriate deans and directors who supervise faculty and researchers in the STEM areas.

5. Early Childhood Education

Better coordination and alignment is needed to develop career paths in programs, and increase the university’s involvement in early childhood education. This alignment and articulation will provide students with programs that will meet their needs, as well as those of the State. However, compensation is a barrier the state may want to examine to increase recruitment and retention of early childhood providers. The University of Alaska applauds the State’s effort to increase the number of children receiving early childhood services, and welcomes collaboration with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development on this very important issue.

### Long Term Goals of the Planning Group

1. Establish the UA Teacher Education consortium or taskforce, which will continue to meet with school districts and industry representatives to engage these stakeholders in the planning effort.
2. Develop an ongoing, long-range planning process for Teacher Education based on the priorities identified by stakeholders and the University of Alaska Board of Regents.
3. Work with school districts and policymakers to research current recruitment and retention challenges, best practices, and alignment of K-12 and college ready.
4. Develop an integrated, cross-MAU marketing campaign to recruit students into the teaching profession with the goal of increasing enrollment in and awareness of the advantages of completing a teacher preparation program. Similar to the “Hot Jobs” and other industry career guides, education needs to develop resources and materials for education.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS & FISCAL NOTE REQUEST**

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### Invest in Education Studies and Research for the State of Alaska

Invest in expanding and updating data collection systems, including workforce development studies in education for the State of Alaska. Expanding the university's capacity to conduct studies and research in education will enable the following:

- Provide ongoing valuable information and data analysis for the standing Senate and House Education Committees, and ensure future reports meet state expectations.
- Support the State Education Plan prepared by the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, including the following goals and activities:

*Collaborate with Alaska's postsecondary institutions to ensure that education-related degree programs and staff development programs reflect research, best practices, Alaska's diverse cultures, and alignment to academic standards, and are sufficient in scale and scope to meet the public school work force needs.*

*Develop a staff development infrastructure that is collaborative, need-based, research proven, and provides opportunities for continuous growth for new and experienced teachers.<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (2008) Draft Alaska Education Plan retrieved from: [http://www.eed.state.ak.us/edsummit/pdf/Education\\_Plan\\_Draft.pdf](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/edsummit/pdf/Education_Plan_Draft.pdf).



Invest in Special Education Teacher Preparation

Invest in growing the special education teacher preparation programs at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Currently, UAF is the only school of education in the university system that does not have a special education program. Funding to support this effort would increase the number of special education teachers for the state of Alaska.<sup>7</sup>

Expand of Scholarship Opportunities for Education Majors

Expand scholarship opportunities for students in high-demand job areas such as education with specific emphasis on shortage areas. Re-evaluate current loan forgiveness programs, and sustain and increase funding for programs that demonstrate efficacy in preparing and supporting teacher recruitment and retention.

University Receipts Received in One Year and Expended in the Succeeding Fiscal Year

Regarding the request, “The University of Alaska shall, in the report required under 24 AS 14.40.190(a) [AS 14.40.190], report the amount of university receipts received in one year and expended in the succeeding fiscal year. The University of Alaska shall, in the report required under 24 AS 14.40.190(a) [AS 14.40.190], report the amount of university receipts received in one year and expended in the succeeding fiscal year.”<sup>8</sup>

This information can be found in Note #7 of the Financial Statements submitted by the University of Alaska finance department.

Requests for Additional Information

For additional copies of the report, information on specific items, or questions, please contact Melissa Hill at the University of Alaska at (907) 450-8400.

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<sup>7</sup> Reference: University of Alaska Fiscal Year 2010, Operating & Capital Budget Request, pg. 17

<sup>8</sup> Source: Sec. 2. AS 14.40.190(b) Laws of Alaska (2008) Source Chapter No. HCS CSSB 241(HES) of the 25<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.