

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Graduation Working Group

Overview, Purpose and Evolution of Group

- Education Summit held November, 2009. Alaska Education Plan established as a result of input from people throughout Alaska and Summit attendees.
- Working groups, including Graduation Working Group were formed to continue the work begun at the Summit.
- Group began work on the goal of World Class Students in January, 2010, with a focus on improving graduation rates, strategies for engaging students.
- Group's initial focus was on high school. With realization that many students are lost at the transition points between elementary and middle, middle and high school focus shifted to include elementary and middle school. Group recognizes importance of the very earliest years to children's later success in school.
- Conversations moved from focus on high school graduation to retention in school and back to graduation.

Membership includes a broad group of stakeholders from throughout the state

- High school students
- Governor's Council on Disabilities
- High School Principals
- District Superintendents
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)
- Anchorage's Promise
- Communities in Schools
- University of Alaska Statewide
- State Agencies: Department of Education & Early Development; Department of Health and Social Services; Department of Corrections;
- Members of House Education Committee
- State Board of Education & Early Development

Working Group Goals:

- To improve the connectedness and/or flexibility of our schools to meet the needs of all students.
- Increase community partnerships and build relationships, which eliminate barriers to learning.
- Increase involvement among culturally unique families and communities in Alaska schools.
- Evaluate current pre-service and certification course work requirements on Multi-cultural and Alaska Studies to assist staff in meeting the unique culturally responsive needs of our changing student populations.

Accomplishments

- At each meeting group members shared the positive steps being taken throughout the state to increase graduation rates.

- Began examination/analysis of policies and procedures that disenfranchise students.
- Suggestions from group regarding Alaska studies and multicultural requirements for teacher certification were presented to the Teacher Quality Working Group and incorporated into the work that group is doing to re-examine course requirements to make them meet the needs of Alaska's changing student populations.
- Middle School Partnership Program established through work of EED Partnership Liaison and RuralCap is linked with group.
- Created and distributed Raising a Graduate poster
- Work being completed on Every Student a Graduate link on EED website:
 - provide resources for students, families, teachers and others interested in increasing student success and increasing graduation rates
 - provide ideas for resolving issues that disenfranchise students and lead to dropping out of school
 - provide information regarding early warning signs for students at risk of dropping out

Next Steps

- Mr. McCormick and Ms. Curran will present the work done by the group to Commissioner Hanley to get direction regarding next steps for the work.