

Alaska Native Students Achieving Academic Excellence in High School

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Problem Statement

- Public Perception
- Two Research Questions
 - 1) Are there high schools where Alaska Native students are achieving academic excellence?
 - 2) If so, are there community and school factors that positively affect Alaska Native students' academic performance?
- Client: First Alaskans Institute



Background

- Traditional instruction methods
- Russian Schools
 - 1774 - St. Herman of Alaska - Kodiak
- 1878 - Religious Boarding Schools
 - Wrangell
- 1971 Lawsuits started against State-Operated School System - Kivalina
 - 1974 - Regional Educational Attendance Areas (REAA)



Positive Deviance

- A few communities have already solved the problem.
- Example - High Dropout Rates in Rural Elementary Schools in Argentina (2002)
- When to Consider Approach

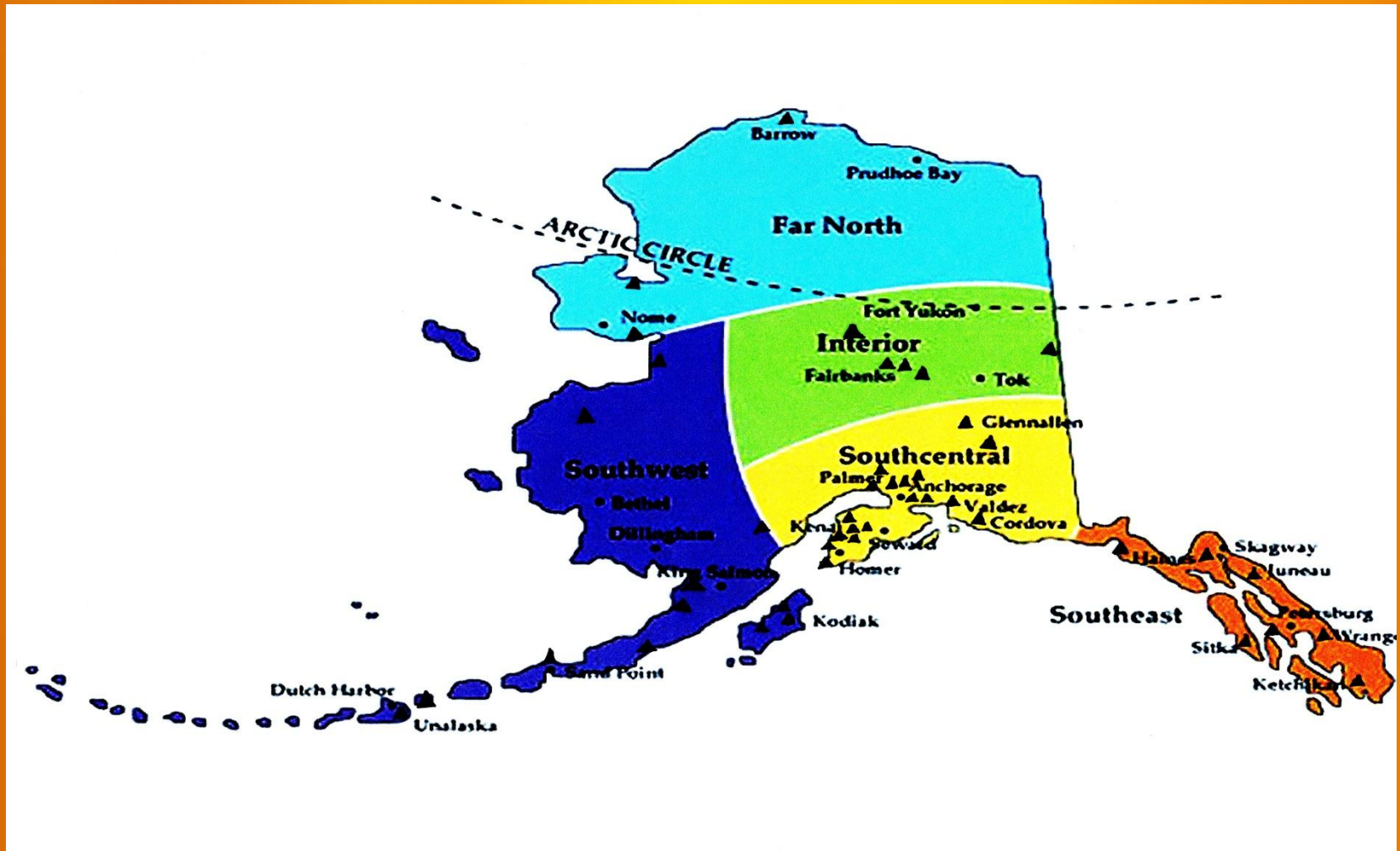


Results - Alaska's High Schools

- **Positive Deviant High Schools**
 - Top 20% or 47 schools
 - 15% to 46% - Achieving Advanced Proficiency
 - 62% to 96% - Achieving a Minimum Proficiency or Greater
- **Answer #1 Research Question = YES**



Positive Deviant High Schools



NOT Statistically Significant School Factors

- **Funding**
 - State Aide
 - Expenditures PDM
- **Schools**
 - Accreditation
 - Attendance Rate
 - Type of Instruction
- **Programs**
 - 21st Century
 - ICE
- **School Districts**
 - # of Schools
- **Teachers**
 - Highest Level of Education of Teachers in School
 - % Academic Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers
 - Student/Teacher Ratio



Statistically Significant School Factors

- Graduation Rate
- Schools
 - Student Survey Return Rate
 - Enrollment Number
- School Districts
 - Type of School District



NOT Statistically Significant Community Factors

- Community Size
- Local Police
- Parent Survey Return Rate
- Voter Participation Rate



Statistically Significant Community Factors

- **Demographics**
 - % of AK Native students in school
 - % of community w/ Bachelor degree or higher
 - % of community w/ HS Diploma/GED or higher
- **Language**
 - % of community speaking an Alaska Native language
 - % of students without Limited English Proficiency



Future Research/Policy Options

- Student Survey Return Rate
- Focus on Rural Education Attendance Area (REAA) School Districts
- Science
- GED Completion / University Distance Education
- Positive Deviance Approach - Learn from the People



The Power of Positive Deviance

Learn from the people

Plan with the people

Begin with what they have

Build on what they know

Of the best leaders

When the task is accomplished

The people all remark

We have done it ourselves

Wisdom of Taoist , Lao-Tzu , interpreted by Richard Pascale, Jerry Sternin and Monique Sternin



Recommendation

- **Positive Deviance Dialogue**
 - Invite Interested Teachers & Parents
 - Scholarships
- **Provide Academic Data (3 years)**
 - Identify Positive Deviants Together
- **Sponsor Field Trips**
 - White Mountain, Nelson Lagoon, Maudrey J. Sommer School in Tanana, Nanwalek, Unalakleet, and others
- **Viable and Sustainable Solutions**

