



# Alaska State Policy Research Alliance: Informing issues with data and evidence

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# Introductions



**David Stevens,  
Ph.D.**



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# Today's goals:

- Overview:
  - Alaska State Policy Research Alliance (ASPRA)
  - Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest (REL NW)
- Review analysis on three issues:
  - Alaska's smallest schools
  - Educator retention
  - Developmental education

# Alaska State Policy Research Alliance (ASPRA)

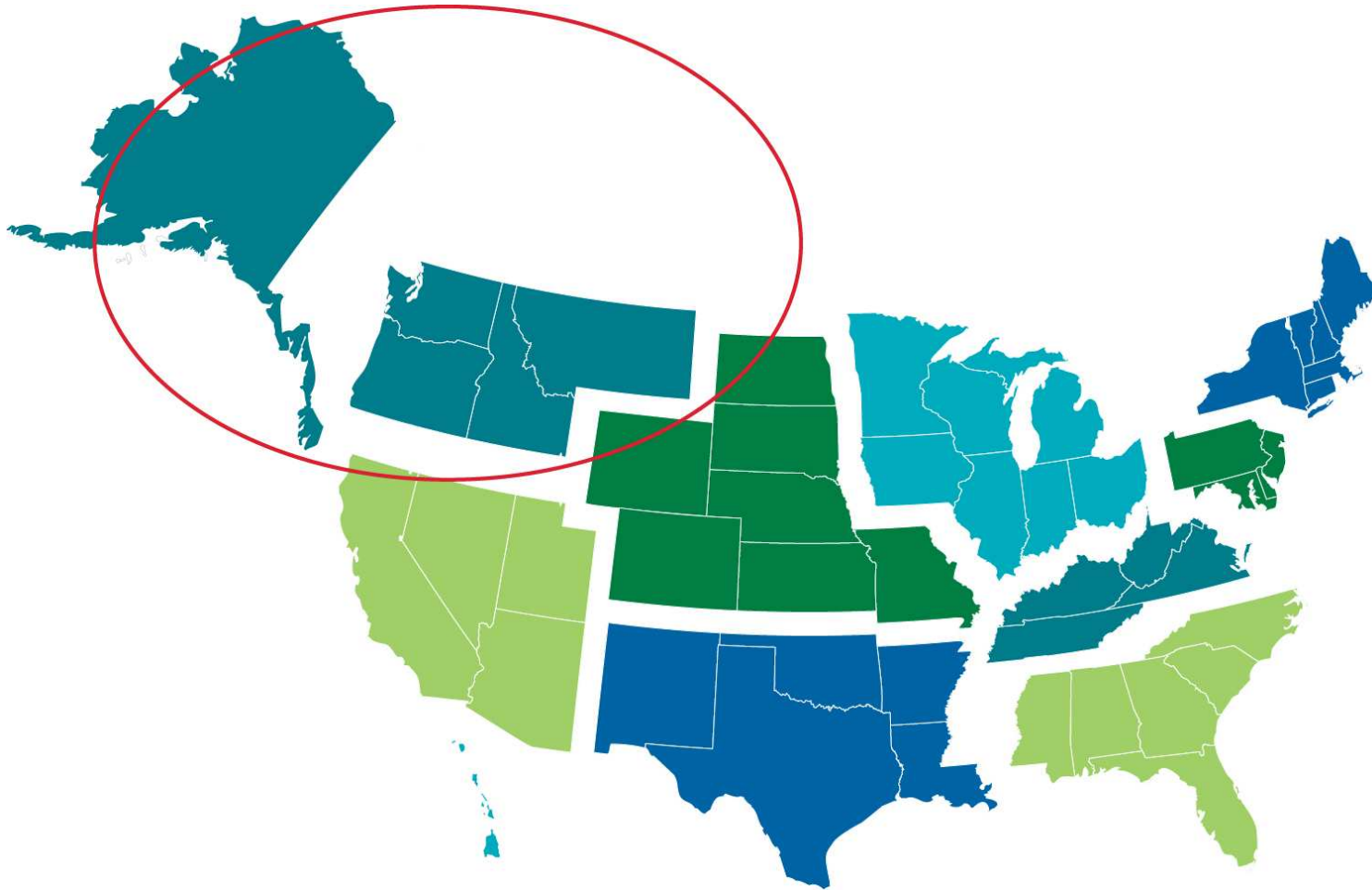
Produce and share  
evidence on Alaska  
education issues



# ASPRA leadership team

- Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) – Dr. Susan McCauley
- Alaska Superintendents Association – Dr. Lisa Parady
- University of Alaska – Dr. Steve Atwater
- REL Northwest – Drs. Pierson & Stevens

# REL Northwest region



# ASPRA activities

- Convene Alaska education stakeholders
- Support stakeholders in using data and evidence
- Conduct original research
- Disseminate evidence



# Four ASPRA working groups

- Educator pipeline
- Early childhood
- State education policy
  - DEED support
- School leadership
  - Superintendents
  - Principals



# Superintendent working group

- ASA & 11 districts
- Chair: Ty Mase, Lake & Peninsula
- Questions:
  - Characteristics of Alaska's smallest schools
  - Alaska's educator turnover rates
  - Strategies to reduce developmental education rates



# Alaska's smallest schools

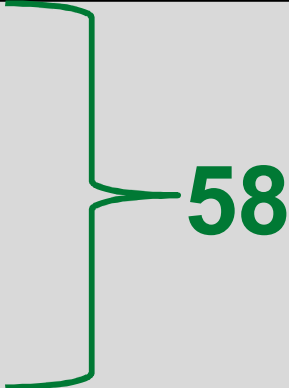


# Enrollment analysis

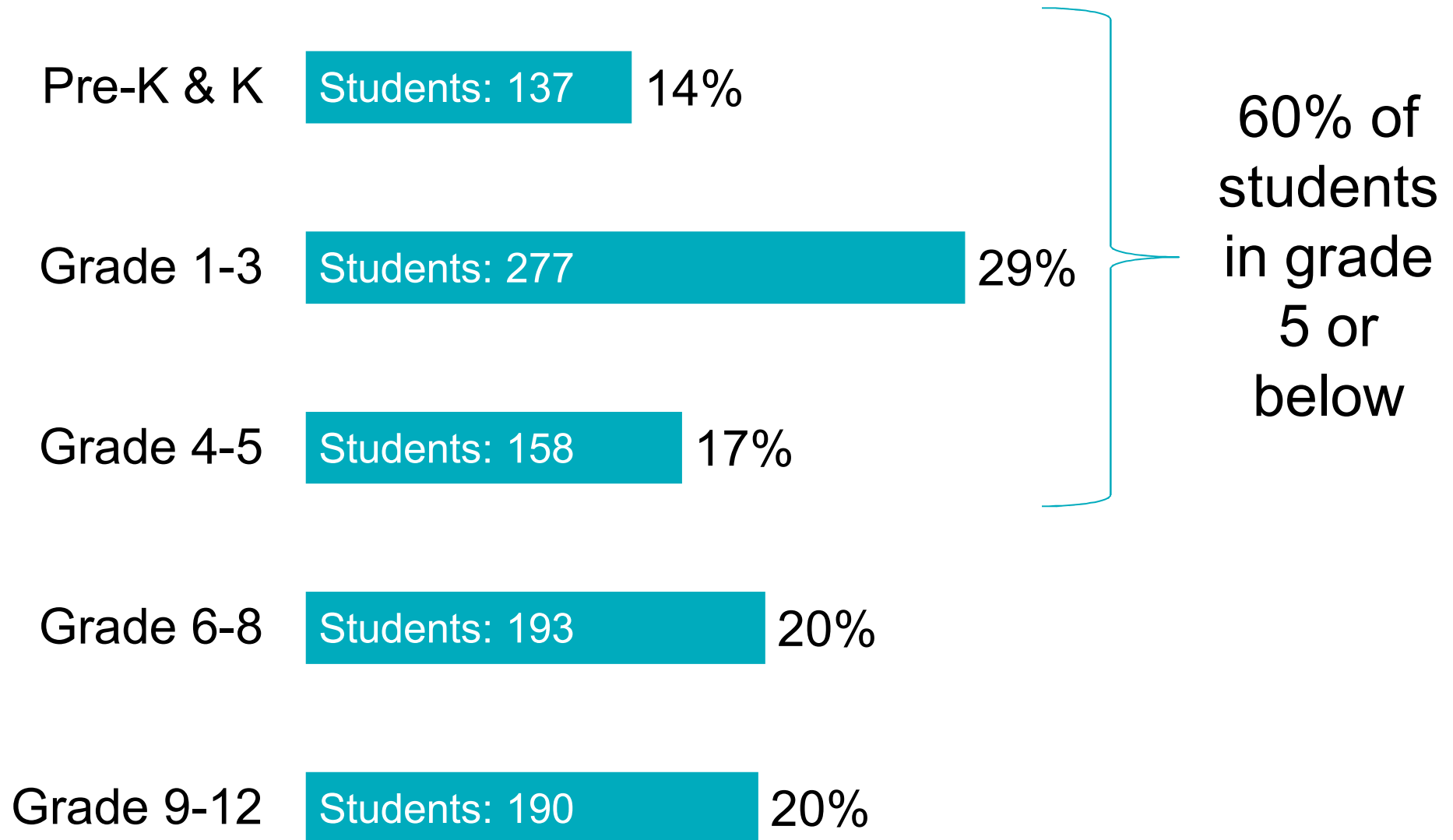
- Public data from 2015-16 school year
- Compare schools with:
  - 10 to 24 K–12 students
  - 25 or more K–12 students
- Understand Alaska's smallest schools
  - Implications of changes in enrollment floor policy

## 58 schools have fewer than 25 students

Enrollment	School count	Percent of total schools
10–14	25	5.6
15–19	24	5.4
20–24	9	2.0
25–29	7	1.6
30–49	27	6.1
50 or more	351	79.2
Total	443	100.0

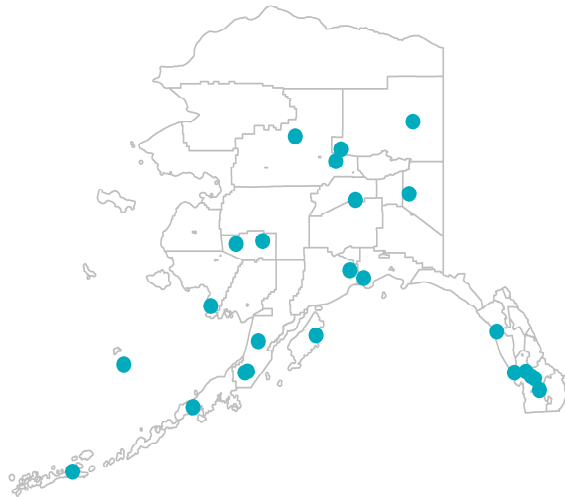


## Schools with less than 25 students have many young students

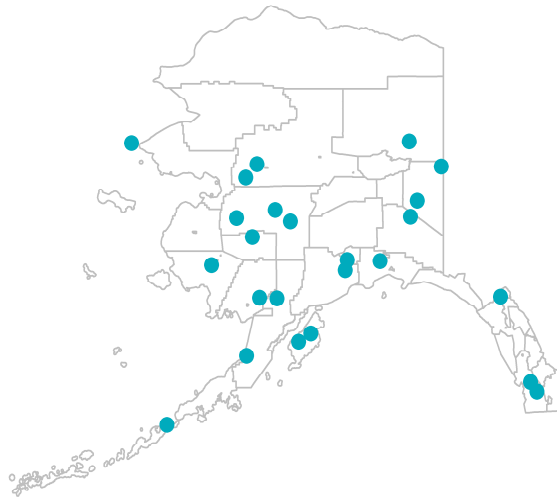


# Schools with less than 25 students are in many regions of the state

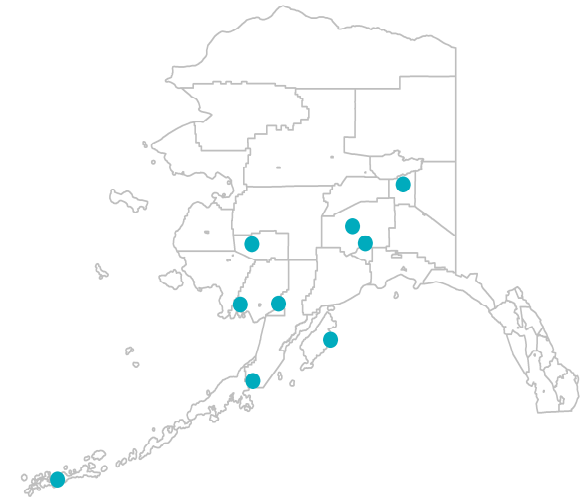
10-14 students



15-19 students



20-24 students



## 22 of 54 districts have schools enrolling less than 25 students

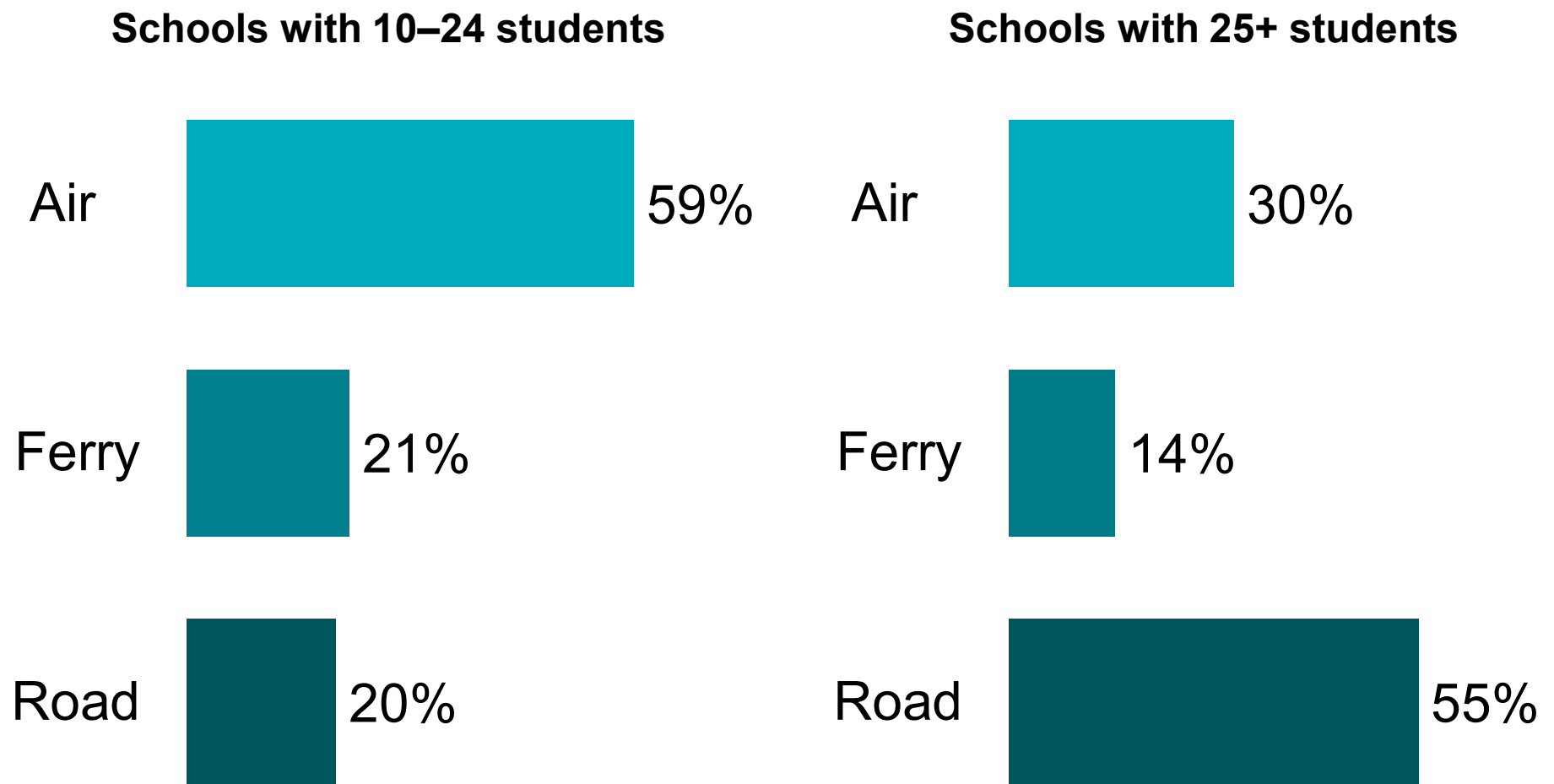
- Alaska Gateway
- Aleutian Region
- Aleutians East
- Bering Strait
- Chatham
- Chugach
- Copper River
- Delta-Greely
- Denali
- Iditarod Area
- Kenai Peninsula
- Kodiak Island
- Kuspuk
- Lake and Peninsula
- Lower Kuskokwim
- Mat-Su
- Pelican City
- Pribilof
- Southeast Island
- Southwest Region
- Yukon Flats
- Yukon-Koyukuk

# Student numbers change each year

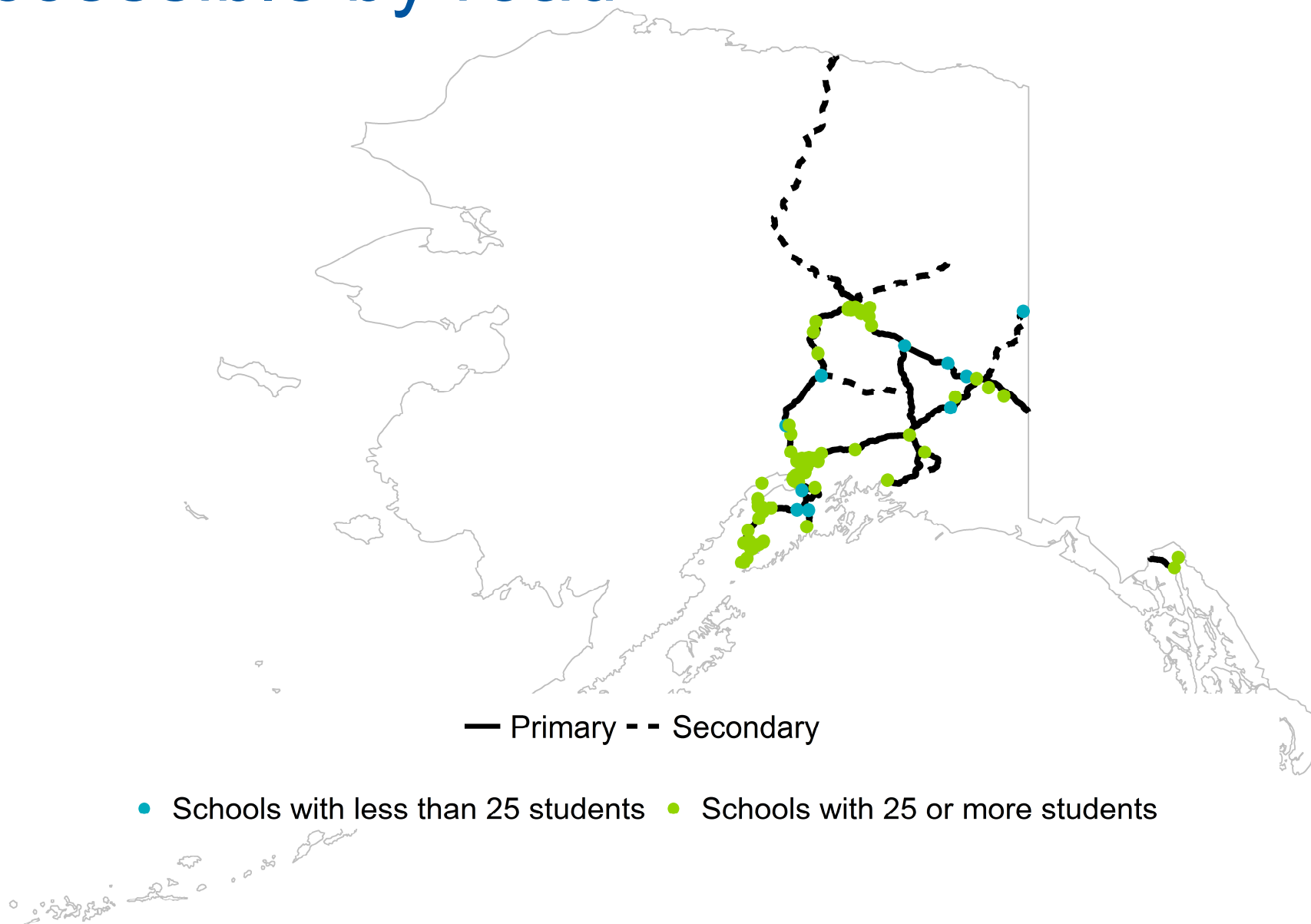
- Most schools experience changes in enrollment each year
- Current policy does not take enrollment fluctuations into account



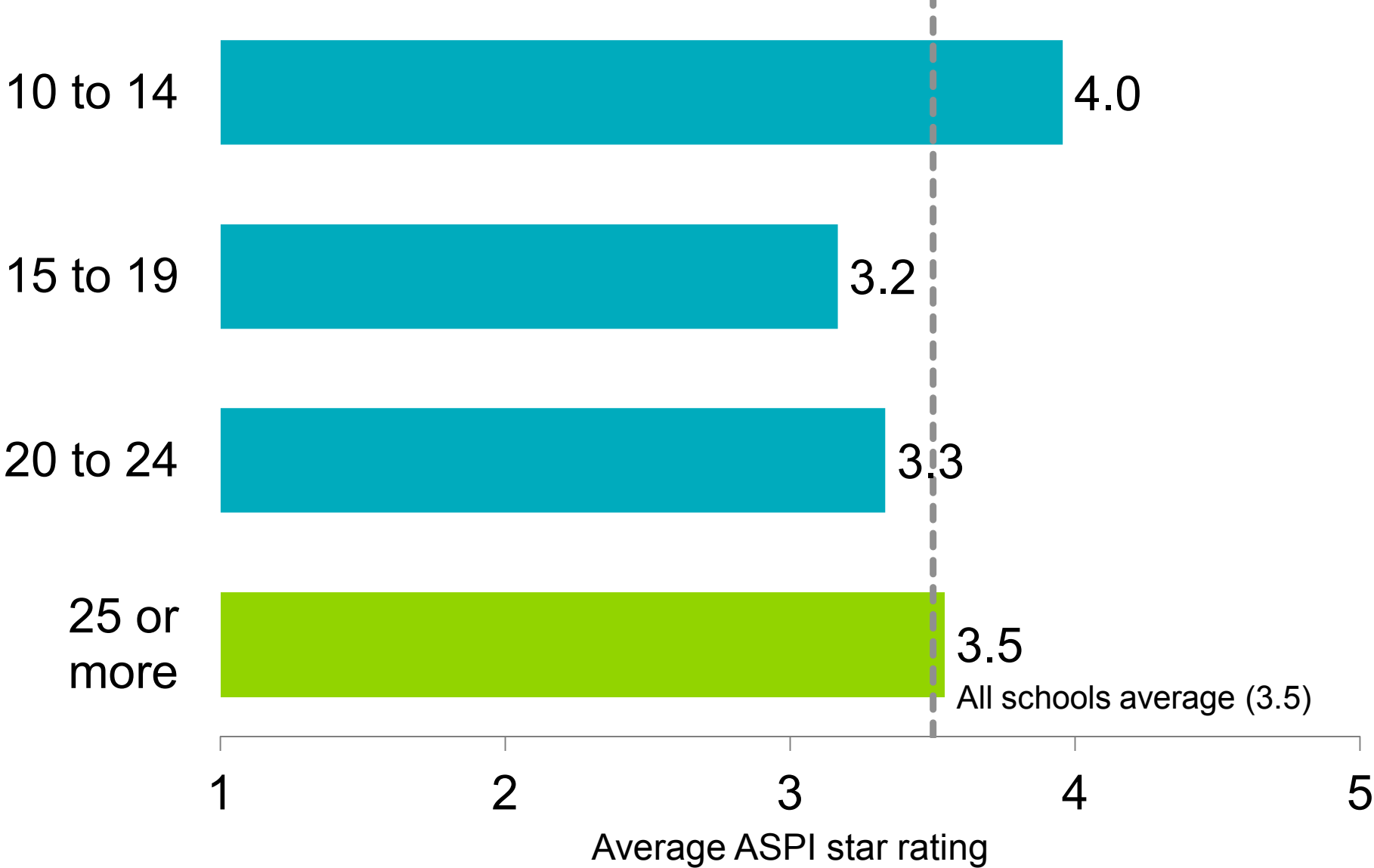
# Most schools with less than 25 students are accessible only by air



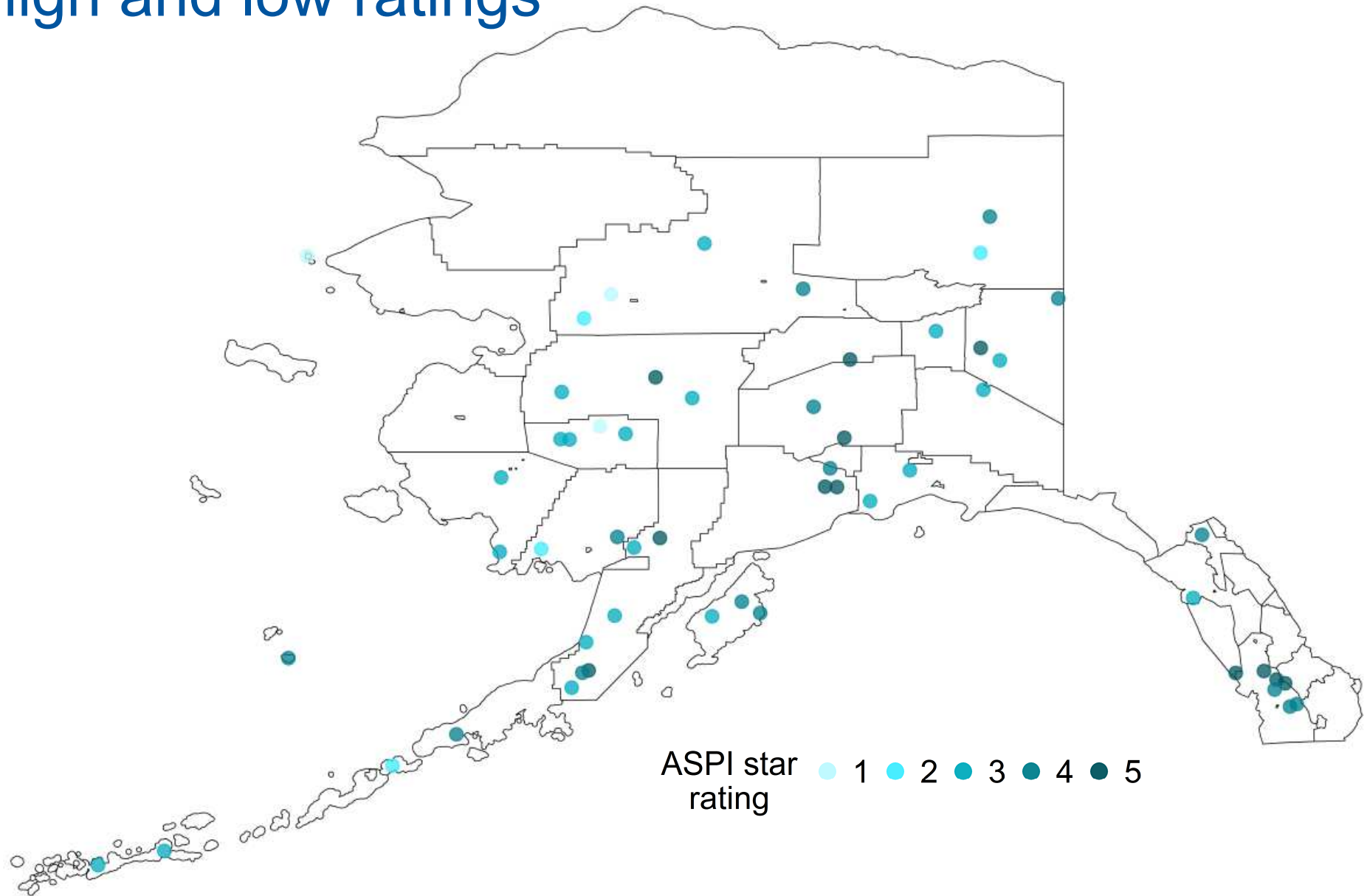
# Few schools with less than 25 students accessible by road



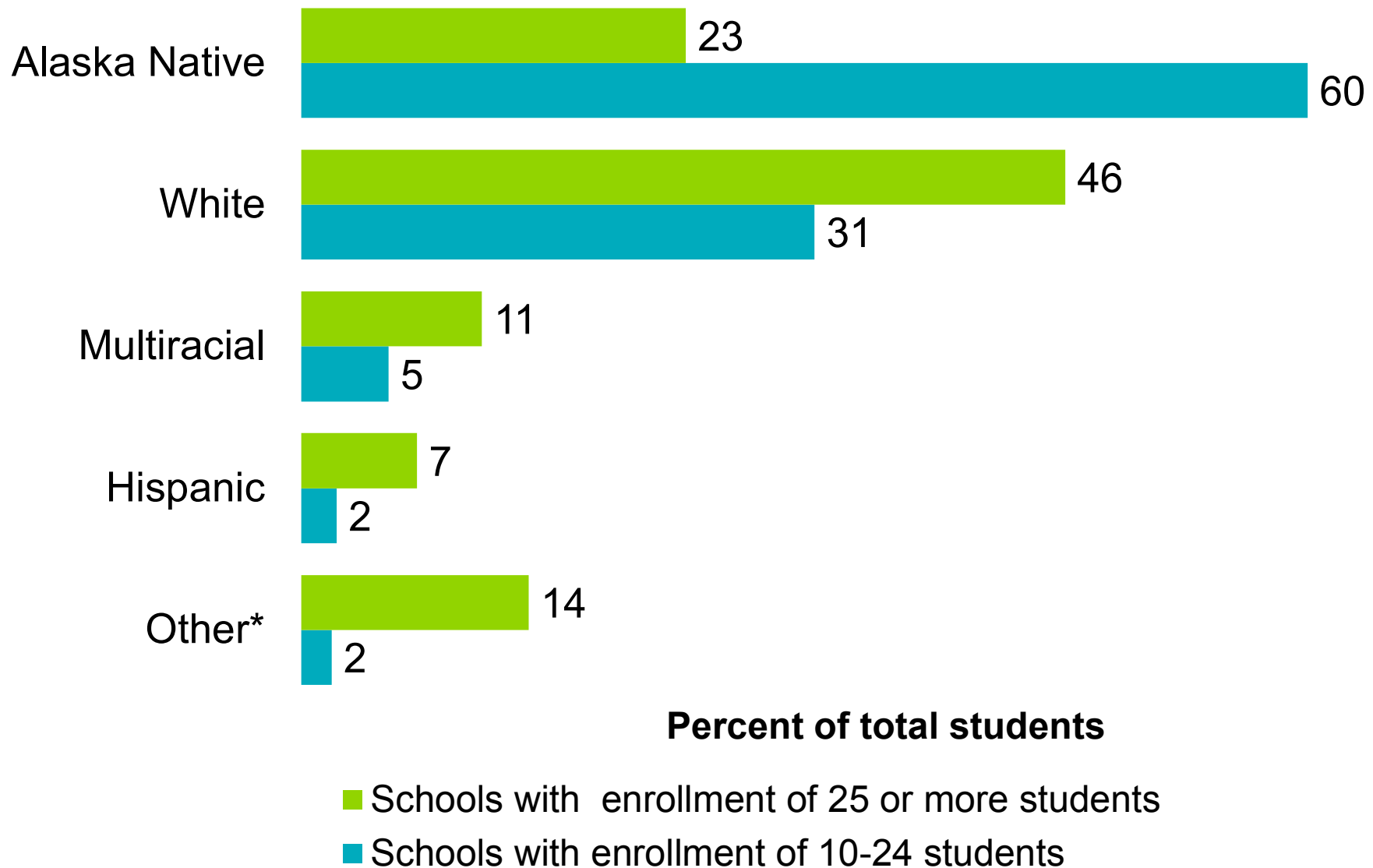
# Schools with 10–14 students had highest ASPI star rating



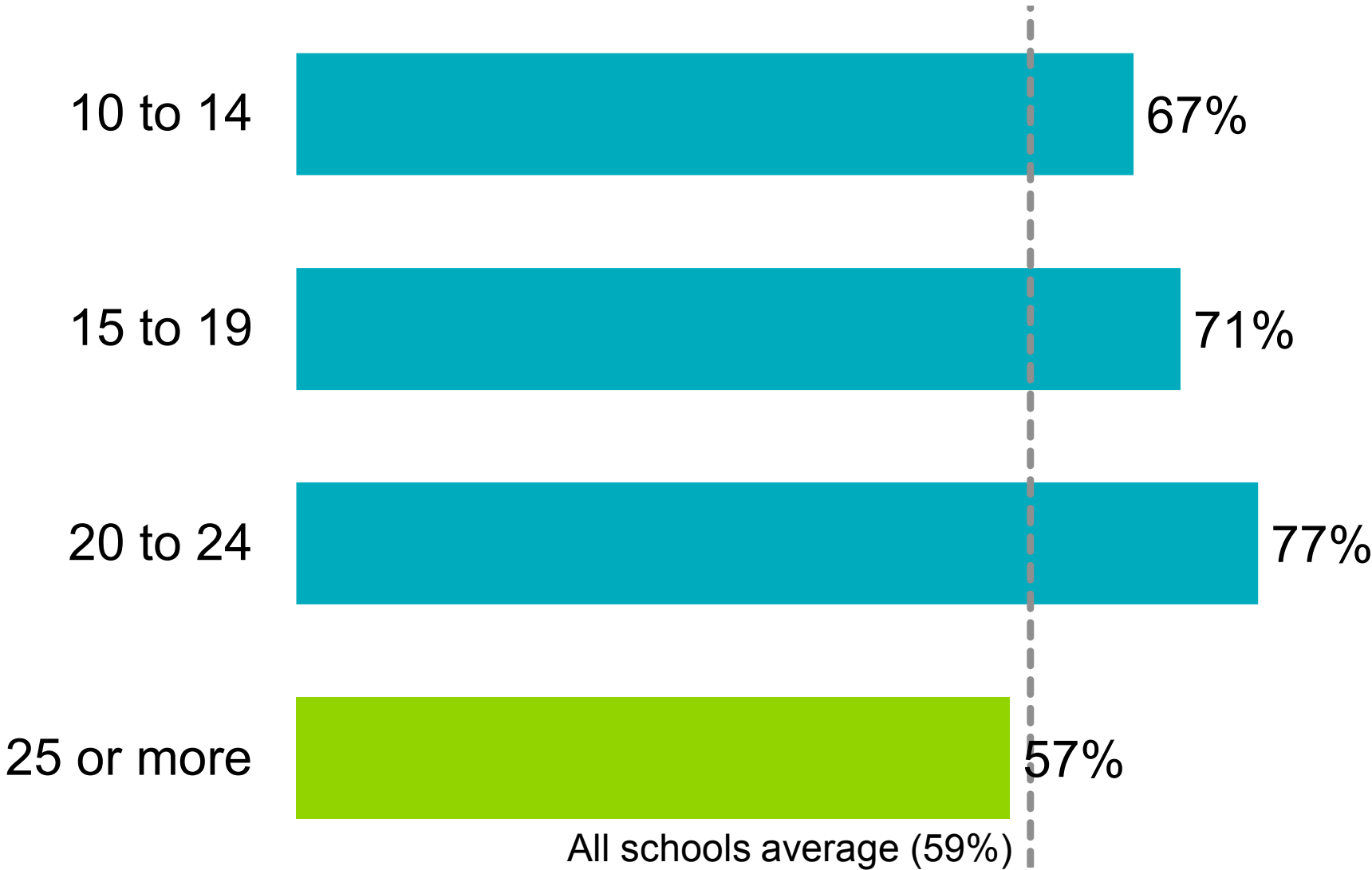
Schools with less than 25 students have both high and low ratings



# Schools with less than 25 students have predominantly Alaska Native population



# Schools with less than 25 students have high percentage of students in poverty



# Alaska's smallest schools

- 13% of schools in most regions of state
- 22 of 54 districts
- 60% of students in grade 5 or younger
- Majority accessible only by air
- Both high- and low-performing schools
- Many historically disadvantaged students

# Educator Retention





# Educator retention analysis

- National research
- DEED and original analysis
  - Public and DEED data
  - Numbers may differ slightly from DEED
- Teacher, principal, & superintendent turnover and retention
  - Turnover – new to school/district
  - Retention – stay at school/district
  - Tenure – years at school/district

# DEED turnover analysis 2016-17

- Teachers
  - Inter-district: 10.5%
  - Intra-district: 12.8%
  - **Total: 22.0% of teachers new to their school**
- Administrators: 30.3%
  - 177 of 584 new to their school

# Turnover rates vary across U.S.

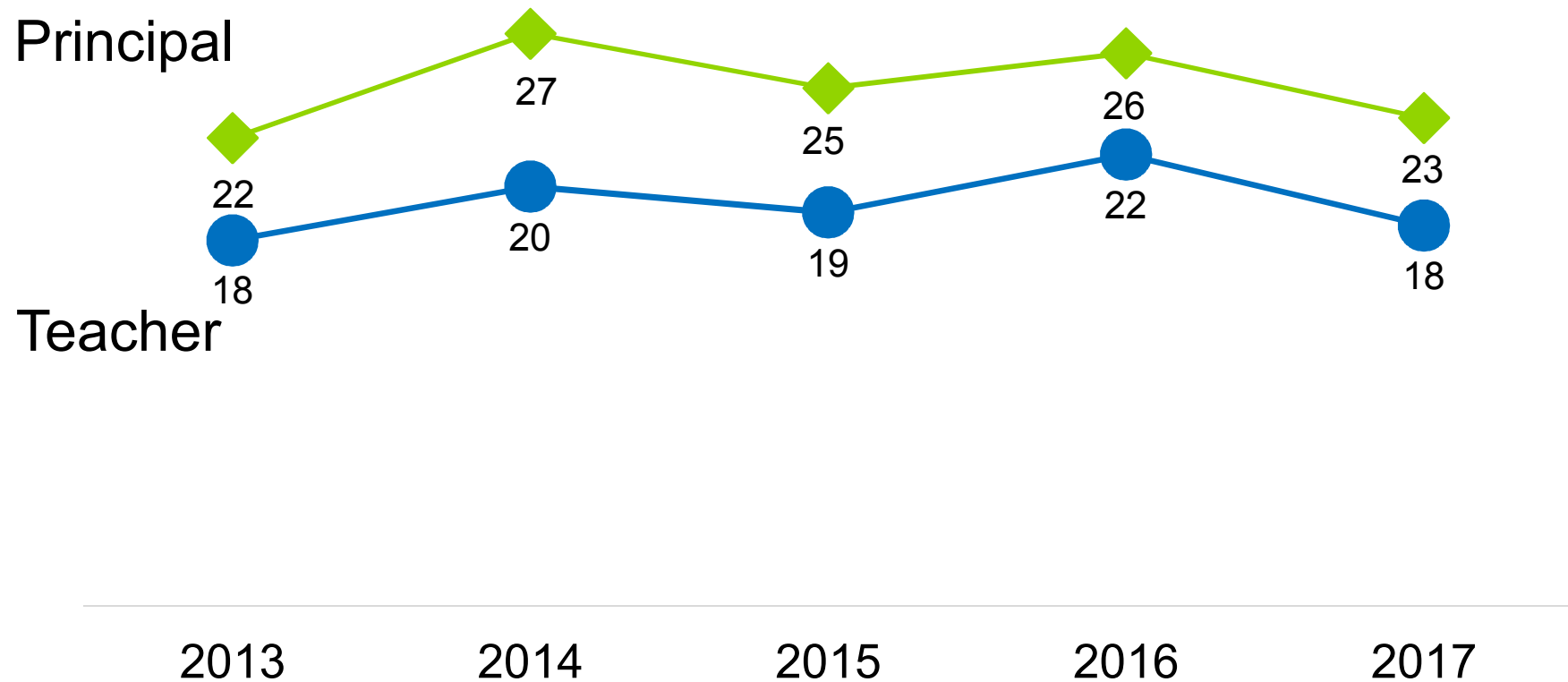
- Teachers (2013):
  - Nationally – 14%
  - Alaska – 17%
  - Hawaii – 21%
  - Idaho – 13%
  - Montana – 19%
  - Oregon - 12%
  - Washington – 10%
- Principals: 15-30% across districts
  - Alaska has 3<sup>rd</sup>-lowest average tenure
- Superintendents: ~15% annually
  - Up to 45% exit in 3 years
- Typically move out of high-poverty/rural schools



# Newly certified & new to state

- Teachers
  - About 10% of teachers new to the state each year for last 5 years (~800 new of 8000)
- Principals
  - In 2013, 13% of principals were new to state
  - Down to 7% by 2017 (27 new of 397)
- Superintendents
  - In 2017, only 1 superintendent new to state

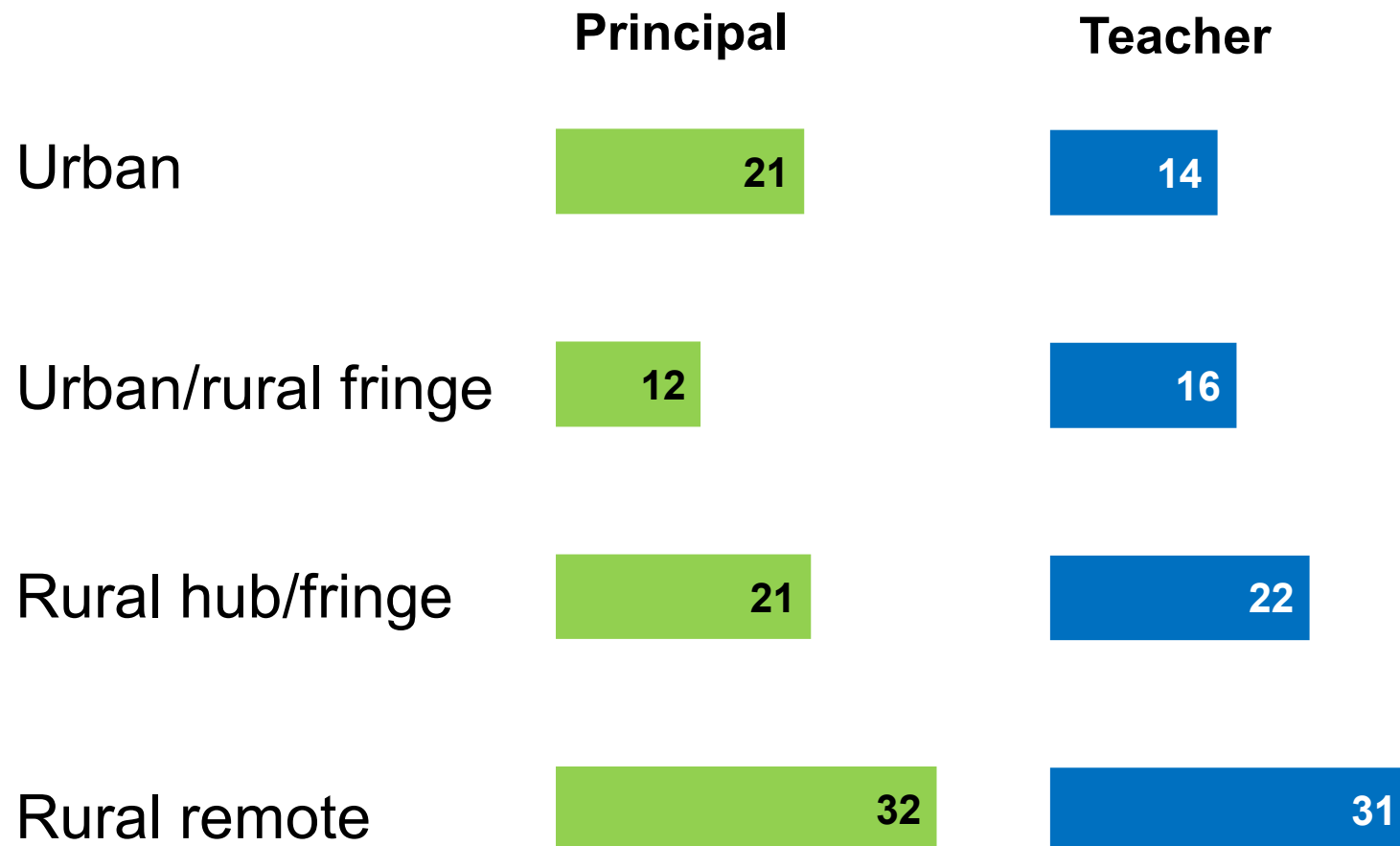
# School turnover: Principal and teacher rates steady over time



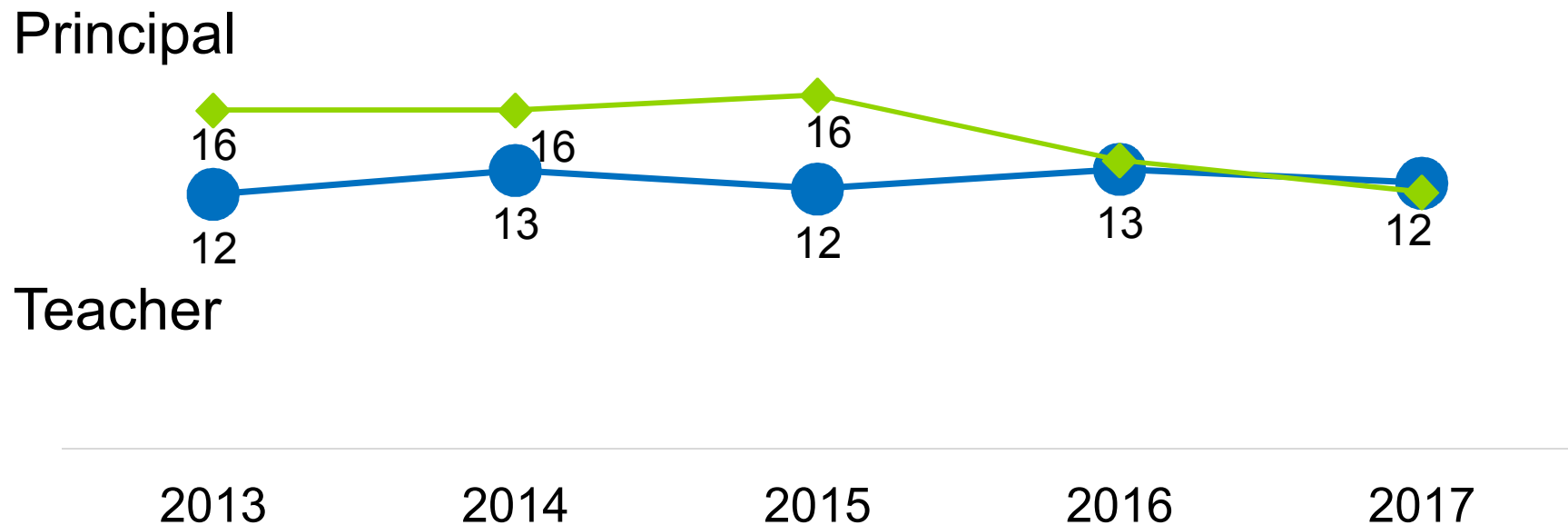
# Defining rural schools

- Created four modified categories
  - Urban (on- and off-road)
    - Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau
  - Urban/rural fringe (on- and off-road)
    - Palmer, Seward, Sitka
  - Rural hub/fringe (on- and off-road)
    - Bethel, Healy, Unalaska
  - Rural remote (off-road)
    - Adak, Arctic Village, Yakutat

# Rural remote schools had highest turnover among principals and teachers, 2016/17



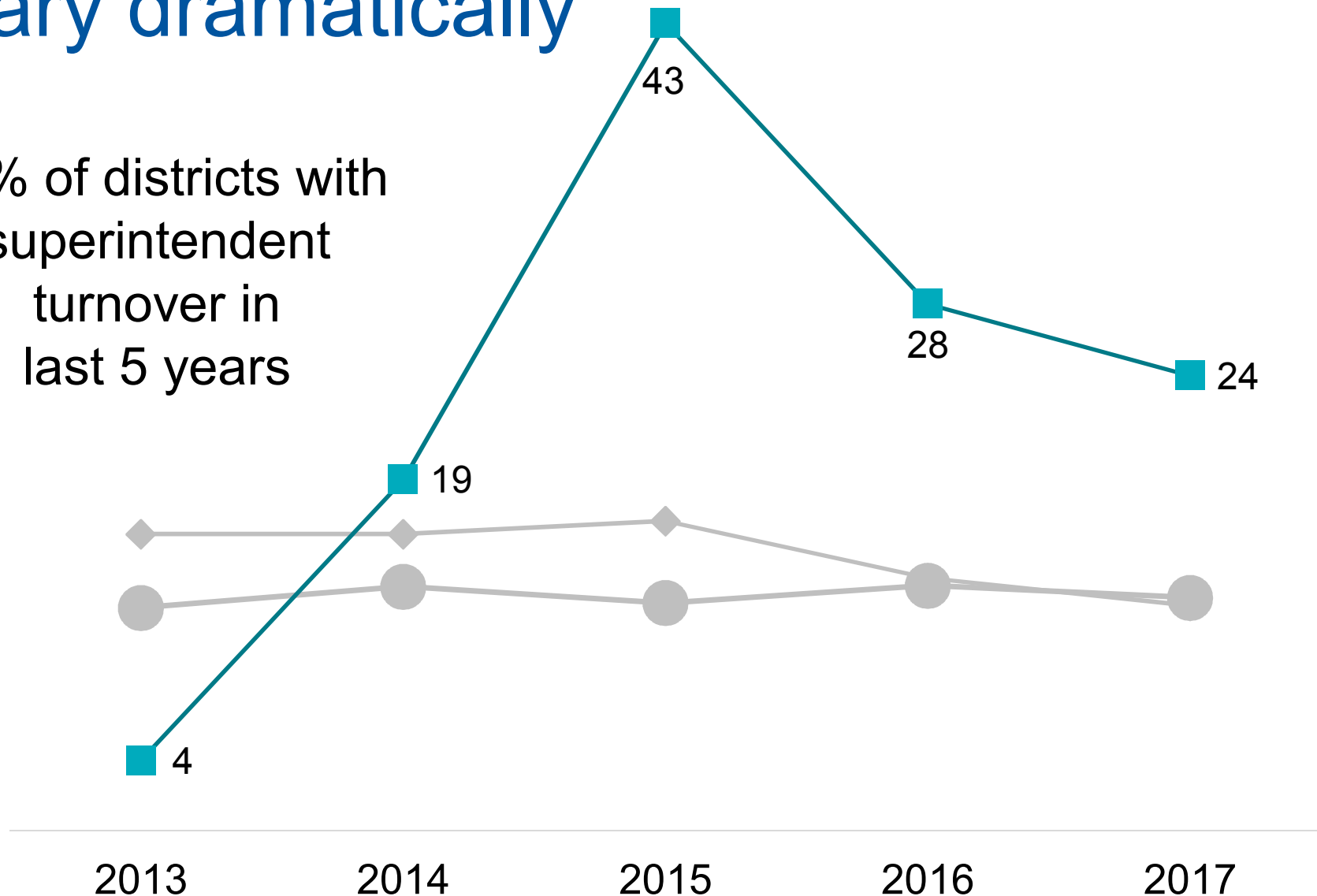
# District turnover: Rates relatively steady over time





# Superintendent turnover: Rates vary dramatically

72% of districts with superintendent turnover in last 5 years



# Strategies to increase retention

- Caveat: Not all turnover is negative
- Grow-your-own staff and leadership
- Improve onboarding of new staff
  - Connections to community
  - Connections to other staff
- Build incentives to stay in contracts
  - Example: bonus after 2 years
- Encourage networks within and across districts
  - Key for rural districts
  - Can be virtual and/or in-person

# Cost of teacher turnover study

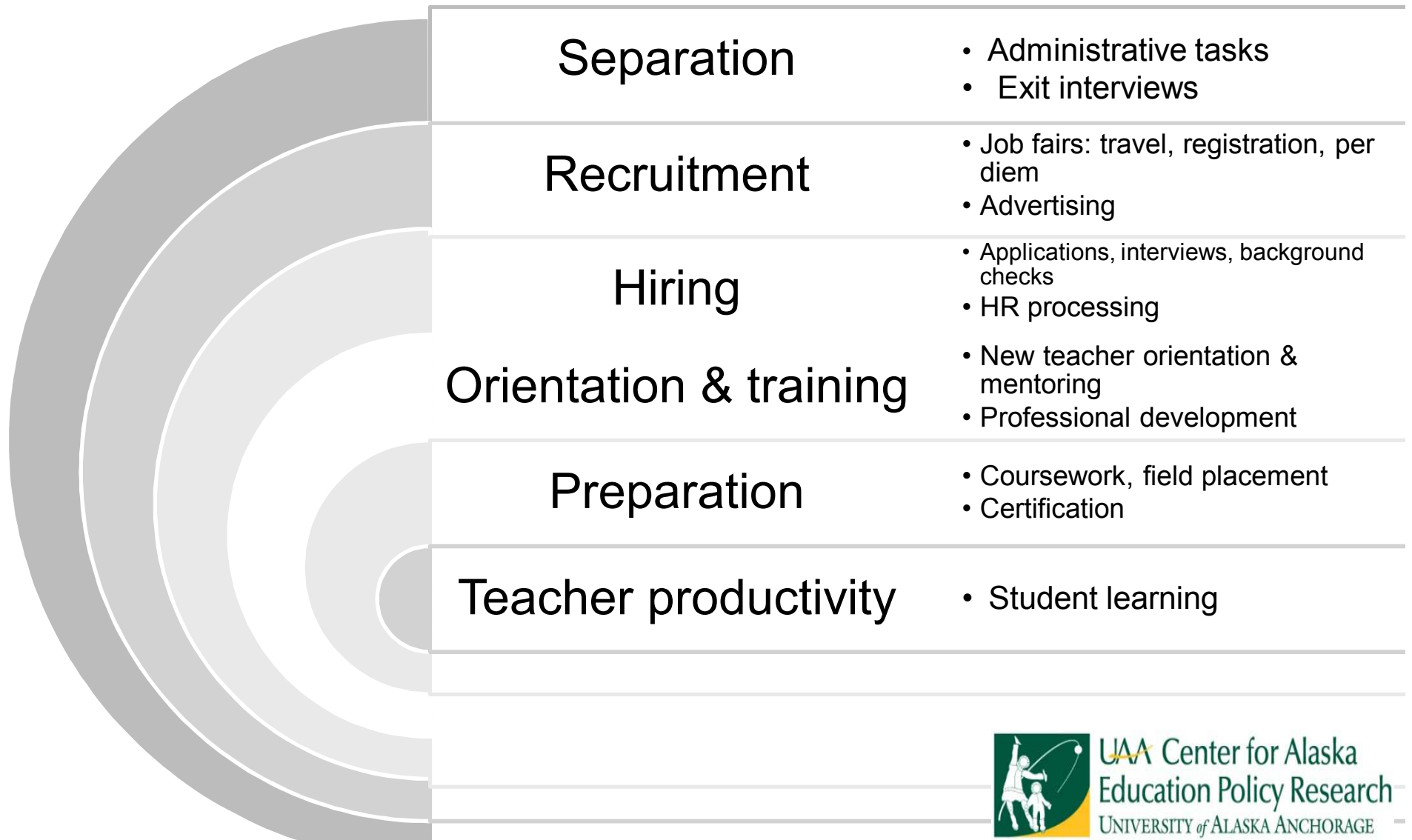
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# Categories and cost examples



# This analysis: District-level costs

Preparation	Teacher productivity	Separation	Recruitment	Hiring	Orientation & training
Preparing teachers through Alaska's universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student learning</li> <li>• School climate</li> </ul>	<b>Exclude</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terminations</li> <li>• Teachers leaving mid-year</li> <li>• Contracted services</li> <li>• Benefits</li> </ul>	<b>Exclude</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wages &amp; benefits for recruitment activities</li> </ul>	<b>Exclude</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community costs, like having elders or parents on interview committee</li> <li>• Benefits</li> </ul>	<b>Exclude</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-level costs</li> <li>• State-wide mentor program</li> <li>• Benefits</li> </ul>



# Teacher turnover report forthcoming

<http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/CAEPR/>

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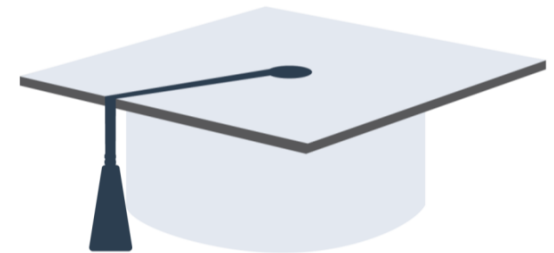
# Developmental Education



# Developmental education

- Non-credit courses
- Prepare students for college math and English

(Hodara & Cox, 2016)



- Students who take developmental education are *less likely* to complete college

(Bailey et al., 2010)



# High school graduates place into developmental education for many reasons

- Graduation requirements may not align with college
- Lack of rigorous coursework
  - Historically disadvantaged students tend to take less rigorous courses
- Misaligned placement processes

(Hodara, 2015)



# Strategies to reduce developmental education rates

- Shorten required math sequence for students not seeking degree in math-focused field

(Hodara & Petrokubi, 2017)

- Increase high school rigor

(Thomas, 2013)

- “Co-enroll” students in developmental and college-level coursework

(Vandal, 2014)

- Change placement policies

(Hodara & Cox, 2016)



# Developmental education rates are higher at community colleges

- Open-access enrollment
- National - entering college class of 2003/04:
  - 68% of community college students
  - 39% of public four-year

(Radford & Horn, 2012)

- Oregon – 75% of recent high school graduates enrolled at community college

(Hodara, 2015)

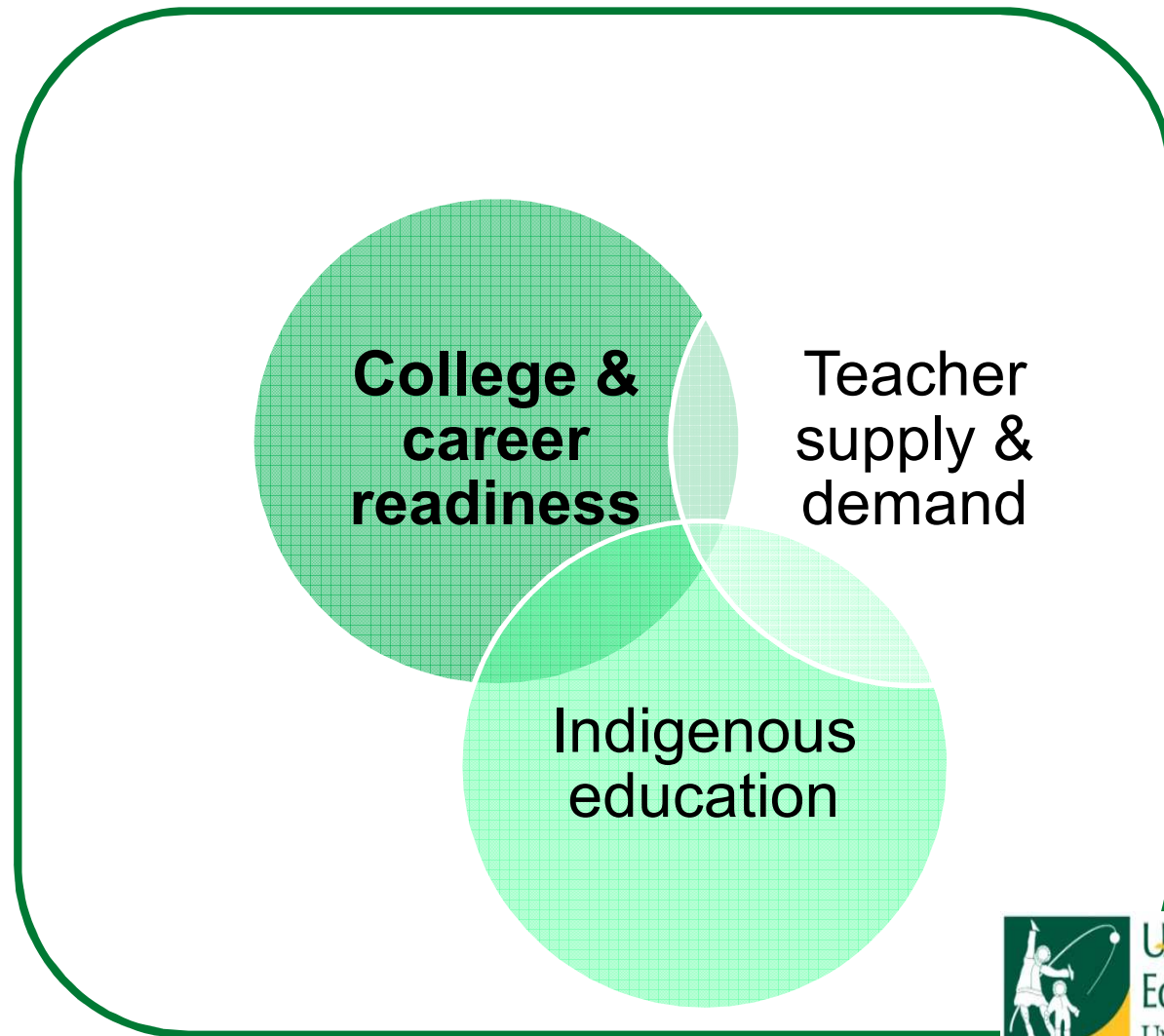
# University of Alaska rates are similar to community college rates in other states

## Developmental education rates:

- 61% of first-time students between fall 2008 and spring 2012
  - Rates higher for math than English
- (Hodara & Cox, 2016)
- 71% of incoming students in fall 2014
- (University of Alaska Anchorage, 2016)
- Open-access institution
- Two-year, four-year, and graduate degrees

# Current CAEPR research focus

## Alaska Education Policy Context



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# Forthcoming work on college readiness

- Early college placement testing
- State of state in education
- Study of high school seniors' aspirations and plans
  - Collaborative proposal in development
    - ACPE
    - 65 by 2025
    - AVTEC
    - School Districts
- Juneau - March 6 & 7

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# Questions?



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