



PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Joint Education Committee Legislative Hearing
November 18, 2020



ALASKA COUNCIL OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

***Leadership, Unity and Advocacy
for Alaska Public Education***



DR. LISA S. PARADY
Executive Director

FEW SCHOOLS ARE OPEN, BUT EDUCATORS ARE CRUSHED



- School restart 2020 planning through summer
- Nutrition – preparation and delivery of meals daily since March
- Preparing for multiple methods of instruction – in-person, distance and hybrid delivery
- Acquiring and distributing PPE to staff and students
- Acquiring and installing materials to preparing for mitigation of viral spread in school buildings
- Training staff to monitor and test for COVID-19 in staff and students
- Coordinating efforts with public health officials, tribal leaders and school boards for COVID response protocols
- Quarantine logistics





WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO EDUCATE ALASKA'S STUDENTS?

Weekly ACSA meetings to plan and collaborate mitigation efforts have been taking place since March for:

- Superintendents (ASA)
- Principals (AASSP, AAESP)
- Alaska Association of School Business Officials (ALASBO)
- Educational Leaders including
 - Alaska Association of School Boards
 - Department of Health and Social Services
 - Department of Education and Early Development
 - Alaska Municipal League
 - University of Alaska
 - Alaska School Activities Association
 - National Education Association
 - And other state and local educational organizations

THE LASTING IMPACT OF A CONTINUING PANDEMIC



Alaska's second wave of COVID-19 is delaying return to school and is closing schools that have been in-person until now, with many schools delaying return to in-person instruction.



Alaska Superintendents Association

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August 7, 2020

Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner
Alaska Dept. of Education & Early Development
PO Box 110500
Juneau, AK 99811-0500

Dear Commissioner Johnson:

On behalf of the Alaska Superintendents Association we are writing to express strong support for using the November 2019 estimated student count data to determine the amount of state aid under the public education funding program for Fiscal Year 2021. We need to ensure schools can operate over the long term, not simply get through this current crisis. Please allow me to share a range of thoughts.

One example of these needs regards smaller schools. What if a school drops below 10 because of parents homeschooling or leaving a village to be closer to medical care? Beyond enrollment decline impacts on budgets, the situation goes even further if districts have to close schools that most likely would have made it if not for COVID-19.

Returning specifically to student counts, these estimates are the basis for state aid to school districts through the Foundation Program allocation. The state's operating budget (HB205) was signed into law on May 18, 2020 with funding from the Foundation Program allocation based on student count estimates. School districts were required to submit budgets on July 15th. Note that these dates occurred as the pandemic was but beginning to unfold.

COVID-19 CONCERNS ABOUT ENROLLMENT

- August 7, 2020 letter to Commission of Education and Early Development expressed strong support for using the November 2019 estimated student count data to determine amount of student aid for FY2021
- Request to establish a floor for funding but recognize increased funding needs for schools with increased enrollment



ALASKA STATUTES: STUDENT COUNT PERIOD

- AS 14.17.600 (a) Within two weeks after the end of the 20-school-day period ending the fourth Friday in October, each district shall transmit a report to the department that, under regulations adopted by the department, reports its ADM for that count period and other student count information that will aid the department in making a determination of its state aid under the public-school funding program.
- For the 2020-2021 school year, the fourth Friday in October is the 23rd, which places the first day of the count period on September 28, 2020.



HOLD HARMLESS PROVISION

- AS 14.17.410 (b)(1)(E) if a school district's ADM adjusted for school size decreases by five percent or more from one fiscal year to the next fiscal year, the school district may use the last fiscal year before the decrease as a base fiscal year to offset the decrease.
- Enacted in 2008, House Bill 273 established a Hold Harmless [HH] provision for those school districts experiencing a reduction in their brick-and-mortar school's average daily membership (ADM) after it has been adjusted for school size in the foundation formula.
- Available to school districts over a three-year step-down of 75% in the first year, 50% in the second year, and 25% in the final year, provided the adjusted for school size ADM total stays below the established "base year."



POLICY RESPONSES FROM OTHER STATES

Arizona – Enrollment Stability Grant Program

- Guarantees greater of 98% of FY20 ADM (average daily membership) or actual FY21 ADM funding
- Supplements foundation formula with CARES Act funding to meet funding guarantee

North Carolina - HB1105

- Bases funding on greater of actual or projected FY21 ADM

Michigan, California, Colorado

- All districts funded using FY20 ADM



STABILIZING SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- The pandemic is temporary, but the impact is lasting. Most students are expected to return to schools, future funding must consider the cost of recovery.
- The current statute is not sufficient to cover losses most districts face.
- The cost of turnover alone due to insufficient funding is great.
- Using the November 2019 estimated student count data would still not meet all the increased costs of 2021 but would stabilize school budgets.



The current budget crisis schools face in the wake of this pandemic has eclipsed all others.



SUPERINTENDENT KERRY BOYD

YUKON-KOYUKUK SCHOOL DISTRICT,
ALASKA SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

ENROLLMENT – THE BIG PICTURE STATEWIDE

- 53 superintendents were surveyed regarding funding stability (one serves two districts)
- Almost 80 percent of superintendents completed the survey and responded
- This is not just about budget but about creating policy



STATEWIDE ENROLLMENT CHANGES



- In-school enrollment change ranges from –56.3% to 9.8%
 - 68% of districts have seen enrollment losses
 - Median district has seen a 9.41% decrease in ADM
- Correspondence enrollment change ranges from 24.3% to 1300%

Data provided by district superintendents



SHIFTING ENROLLMENT FOR 2020/2021

Neighborhood schools

Homeschools

Statewide correspondence



LARGE DISTRICT IMPACT

- Migration to district-provided correspondence yields mixed results
For some schools, correspondence enrollment offsets losses, for other it does not
- High toll of shifting staffing and operations

“It may be a tumultuous time of letting people go to only bring them back as school starts- similar to what has happened in some past years when the funding has been so vulnerable. This is hard on staff and the system.”

Data provided by district superintendents



RURAL DISTRICT IMPACT

- Relatively small gains and losses of students in many districts
- Few districts with large losses – up to 40%
 - Anticipating significant staffing loss
- Loss to outside correspondence options

"Our students cannot afford to have fewer staff or less access to opportunities than they have experienced in recent years. If we are not moving forward, we are falling behind."

Data provided by district superintendents



CORRESPONDENCE ENROLLMENT

- Enormous growth in correspondence programs statewide
 - Shortage of qualified teachers

"Just as this year's been a sea change so to speak ... we don't know how many will end up back in brick-and-mortar schools, likely many thousands.

As we look to next year, we must decide in January if we'll be offering contracts to our many new teachers, but we won't have a sense of next year's enrollment until summer."

Data provided by district superintendents



STAFFING CONCERNS



- Struggle to fill positions that might be temporary
- Shortage in qualified staff
- Forthcoming retirement wave
- Issuing contracts with uncertain enrollment numbers

"Without knowing our state funding when we offer contracts and recruit, it is just a roll of the dice."



STAFFING CONCERNS

- New responsibilities and added stress for teachers
 - Virus mitigation efforts
 - Special Education needs
 - Keeping students fed
 - Preparing multiple learning plans
- Building pressure on teachers drives turnover

District-Level Turnover Expenditures per Teacher, by Cost Category

	Separation	Recruitment	Hiring	Orientation and training
Per-teacher cost calculation	\$2,448.95	\$1,910.35*	\$4,901.91	\$11,169.86
Percent of cost	11.99%	9.35%	23.99%	54.67%
Expenses included	Administrative, maintenance, security tasks	Job fairs, advertising	Screening applicants, interviews, administrative processes	PD, onboarding, new teacher support
Total calculated cost per teacher: \$20,431.08				

*Excludes wages – material costs only

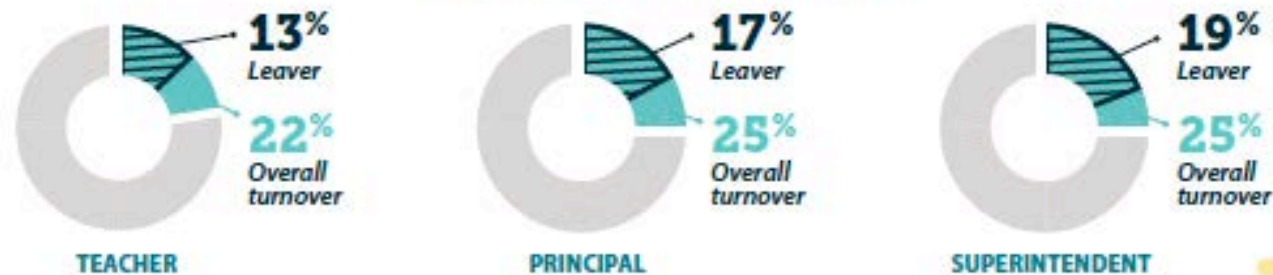




Most of Alaska's turnover was educators leaving Alaska or the profession

Statewide turnover rates from 2012/13 to 2017/18 remained steady for teachers but varied for principals and superintendents.² Nearly 60 percent of teacher turnover involved "leavers"—individuals who left Alaska or remained in the state but were no longer educators. For example, in 2017/18, 13 percent of teachers left the profession or their position, while 9 percent of teachers went to a new district or school but remained in the Alaska public school system.

Turnover rates in Alaska for 2017/18



Rural schools and students are hardest hit by turnover

Rural schools have much higher teacher and principal turnover than urban or urban-fringe schools, with 64 percent of rural-remote teachers who turn over leaving the state or the profession.

Average annual turnover rates for 2012/13 to 2017/18



TURNOVER

Retention and recruitment of educators in Alaska has been a challenge and the added stress of the pandemic has already had an impact on numbers.

LOOKING AHEAD, THE COST OF RECOVERY



Learning loss

- For many students, distance delivery has not replaced direct, in-person instruction. We do expect to address learning loss.

Social-Emotional impact

- We are already seeing the social and emotional trauma of the pandemic in both students and staff.

Special Education

- Still no easy solutions for distance learning, teachers and staff face immense pressure to deliver in-person instruction while facing the risk of health and safety for themselves, their students and families.





EQUITY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Digital Divide

- Internet access/devices for students –
- Now that students rely on these services, we will need to sustain the cost.

For rural schools with no connectivity or infrastructure in place we need to close the equity gap.





COVID-19 IMPACT ON ENROLLMENT FOR YUKON-KOYUKUK

- Rural school enrollment has seen little change
- Homeschool program has seen a **135% increase in enrollment**
- Raven Homeschool teaching/support staff nearly **doubled** to meet the needs of increased homeschool enrollment





COVID-19 ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR YUKON-KOYUKUK

Homeschool enrollment increase will result in a 54% increase in district revenue, resulting in an additional \$12M for 2020/2021.

* No significant increases to the district office staff such as business office, IT, despite increased demand on existing staff.



STABILIZING SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS



Reset the focus on student achievement

Retain high quality, experienced educators

Funding stability today supports quality schools long-term





SUPERINTENDENT JOHN O'BRIEN
KENAI PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT





**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Joint Education Legislative Hearing
November 18,2020**

***The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to develop
productive,
responsible citizens who are prepared to be successful in a dynamic world.***



FY21 Student Count

	FY20 Actual Count	FY21 Projected Enrollment	FY21 Actual Count	Difference between Projected and Actual
Neighborhood Schools	7,717	7,763	6,015	-1,748
Connections Homeschool	<u>818</u>	<u>810</u>	<u>1,744</u>	<u>934</u>
Total	8,535	8,573	7,759	-814
FY21 Intensive Needs	224	215	194	-21



FY21 General Fund Budget State of Alaska (SOA) Foundation Revenue

	SOA Foundation Revenue	Difference from Original Budget
Original FY21 Budget Projection	\$77,652,172	
FY21 with decreased enrollment	\$64,867,580	(\$12,784,592)
FY21 Revenue with current hold harmless statute	\$76,181,901	(\$1,470,271)

AS 14.17.410 Public school funding protects neighborhood brick and mortar school. Unfortunately, intensive needs students are not included in the hold harmless statute and they are responsible for the remaining deficit.



FY21 Pupil Transportation Summary

	FY21 Projected Enrollment	FY21 Actual Count	Difference between Projected and Actual
Neighborhood Schools	7,763	6,015	-1,748
Pupil Transportation Funding per student	<u>\$1,011</u>	<u>\$1,011</u>	
Total FY21 Projected Transportation Funding	\$7,848,393	\$6,081,165	\$(1,767,228)

August 27, 2020 KPBSD inquired to DEED regarding Hold Harmless enrollment for Transportation and if it would be applied.

Response from Mr. Blackwell, DEED School Finance Manager on August 27, 2020 *“If a district triggers HH they will get 75% of the difference for foundation but we do not use the adjusted HH number for pupil transportation. Short answer is there is no HH provision for pupil transportation.”*



FY21 Quick Budget Summary

		<u>Deficit</u>
FY21 Deficit without Revenue Loss		(\$942,778)
Governor Veto of Legislative One-Time funding	(\$2,072,133)	(\$3,014,911)
KPB COVID-19 Revenue related decrease (July 2020)	(\$2,776,473)	(\$5,791,384)
AK Foundation Enrollment Revenue decrease (November 2020)	(\$1,470,271)	(\$7,261,655)
Pupil Transportation	(\$1,767,228)	(\$9,028,883)



FY22 Projected Enrollment

- When projecting the FY22 enrollment, we took a conservative approach.

	FY21 Projected Enrollment	FY21 Actual	FY22 Projected Enrollment
Neighborhood Schools	7,763	6,015	6,572
Connections Homeschool	<u>810</u>	<u>1,743</u>	<u>1,289</u>
Total	8,573	7,758	7,861

- In March/April we will reevaluate our student projections to adjust as needed. This will allow us to hire staff for the fall.
- Staffing is based on projected enrollment

THANK YOU!

- Questions?

