

Teacher retention & recruitment in Alaska

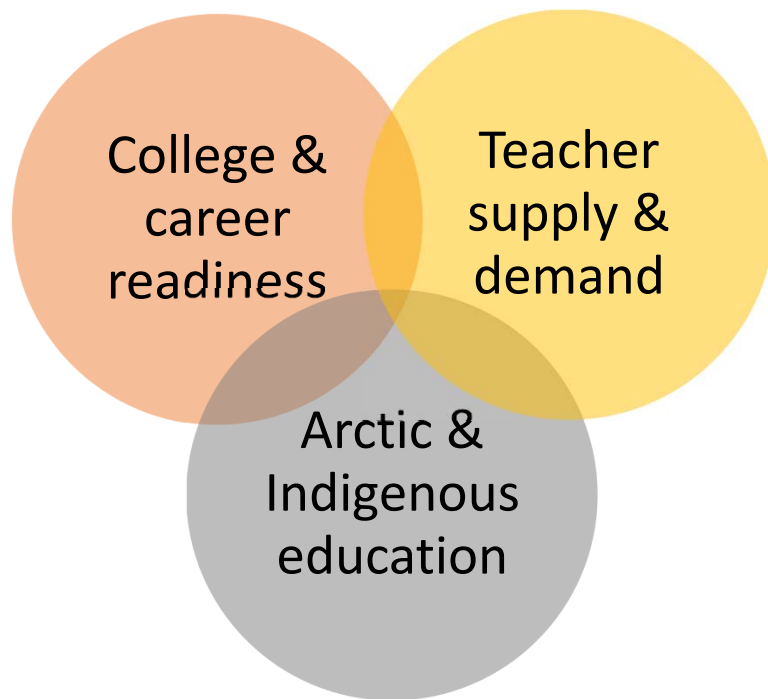
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**UAA Center for Alaska
Education Policy Research**
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE



Who we are

Education policy research unit and clearinghouse at ISER

What we do

Conduct & disseminate education research that is relevant to Alaskans



Alaska's teacher turnover context



Current Workforce

≈ 7,900 teachers

- 15% (1184) new to Alaska in 2017-2018 (per REL)
- 53% of teachers prepared in Alaska work in urban schools
- 24% teach in rural/remote schools
- Inexperienced (1st year) teachers 2½ times more likely to be in high-poverty than low-poverty schools














Alaska's perfect storm



- Alaska economic downturn
 - Budget cuts to school districts – teacher salaries less competitive
 - Fiscal uncertainty and perceptions of instability
- Teacher shortage in lower 48
 - Decrease in teacher production nationwide
 - Majority of Alaska's new teacher hires are from outside
 - Salaries increase with shortage
- Economic boom lower 48
 - Districts more able to pay better



An economic perspective on teacher turnover

	Demand	Supply	Turnover	Competitiveness
US	 Strong economy creates increased demand for teachers in other states ⁱⁱ	 Decreased interest in teaching profession ^{iii,iv}	 High turnover in profession in general	 Strong economy allows other states to offer better compensation packages
		 Declining enrollments and graduates in teacher preparation programs ^{v,vi,vii}	 In good economy, highly qualified teachers find jobs in private sector or other fields ^{viii}	
AK	AK's demand for teachers has been steady for past decade ^{ix}	AK-prepared teacher supply has been flat since at least 2008	 About 22% of AK's teachers turn over annually ^x	 In AK's fiscal crisis, teacher salaries and benefits have not increased commensurate to other states
	 Most of AK's new teacher hires come from the lower 48	 UAA, AK's largest teacher preparation program, suspended admissions in 2019	 Turnover is higher in rural and low-income schools ^{xi}	

Source: *Growing our own: Recruiting Alaska's youth and paraprofessionals into teaching*

Supply

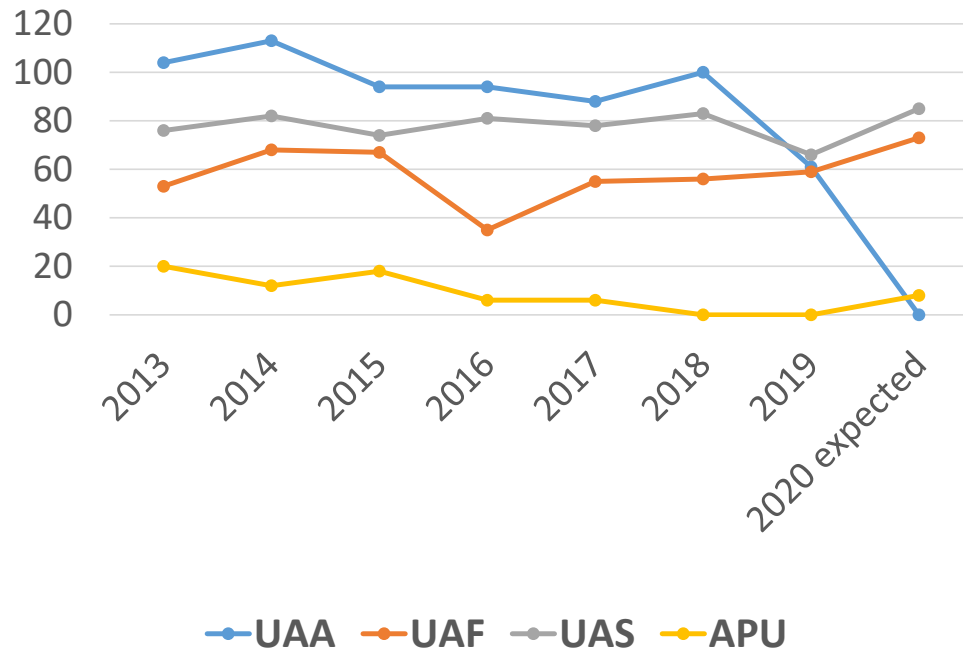
Sources:

1. Alaska's teacher education programs
2. Out-of-state hires



Growing our own

Alaska initial licensure graduates 2013-20



244
2013-18 average

- **APU**
 - Suspended admissions 2017-18
 - Reopened 2018-19
- **UAA**
 - Closed initial licensure programs in 2019



Growing our own

Initial licensure programs	APU	UAF	UAS
BA Elementary Ed		X	X
BA Secondary Ed		X	
Post-Bac Elementary Ed	K-8	X	X
Post-Bac Secondary Ed		X	X
BA Special Ed			X
Post-Bac Special Ed		X	X
K-12 Art Ed		X	
K-12 Music Ed		X	

**How do we get
more people
into this
pipeline?**



What encourages people to become educators?

1. Experience working with youth
2. **A personal connection to someone who is an educator**
3. **Working as a paraprofessional**
4. **Taking a career exploration course**



Source: *Growing our own: Recruiting Alaska's youth and paraprofessionals into teaching*

What discourages people from becoming educators?



53%

Who?

- Family and relatives
- Friends and coworkers
- Acquaintances who are teachers
- Previous Teacher
- Public opinion and general sentiment
- University Professor or program

What?

- Low pay
- High stress or workload
- Low respect or appreciation
- Poor academic record
- Better job opportunities in other fields
- Bad experiences with teachers or professors
- Lack of financial or professional support



Source: *Growing our own: Recruiting Alaska's youth and paraprofessionals into teaching*

Initiatives to grow the workforce

- PITAAS - Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska's Schools
- Indigenous Scholars Program
- Educators Rising Alaska
- District-based Parapro to Teacher pathways
- Teacher recruitment initiatives

Sources: *Growing our own: Recruiting Alaska's youth and paraprofessionals into teaching*
Alaska Native-focused teacher preparation programs: What have we learned?



Hiring from outside

Work & resource burden on rural superintendents & districts

- Job fairs
- Engage professional networks
- Find housing
- Communicate with candidates

It's not just about credentials

- Teachers' fit for place
 - 12.5% new to the state (AY 13-18 average)
- Orientation & training
 - Adjusting to village living
 - Culturally relevant pedagogies
 - Being a brand new teacher

Too expensive to fly teachers into communities for interviews

- Teachers take jobs sight (and site) unseen
- 983 (XX%) of new teachers from outside (AY18)
 - 23% in rural AK
 - 10% in urban

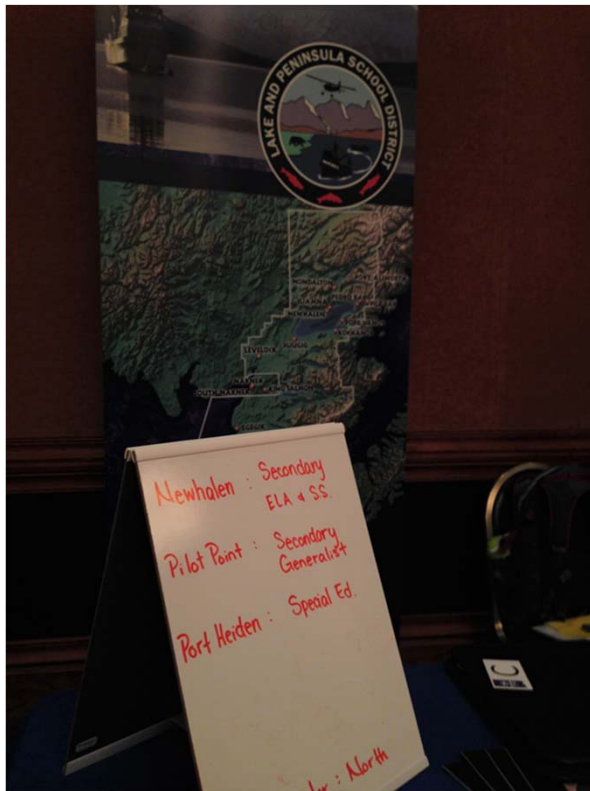


Source: *Recruiting, hiring, and training Alaska's rural teachers: How superintendents practice place-conscious leadership*

Demand



Alaska's demand for teachers



Over 1000 teachers hired every year

- Demand driven in part by turnover

Some jobs are more difficult to fill

- Positions
 - Secondary math and science
 - Special education
- Schools
 - Low-income
 - High minority
 - Rural & remote rural communities



Turnover & retention



Why high turnover is problematic

Impacts quality of instruction

Like any job, teachers get better with experience

Erodes school climate

Teachers need time to develop relationships and trust with one another

Affects continuity of instruction

It interrupts multi-year curriculum planning

Impacts PD

Districts invest in PD for new teachers, which limits resources for continuing teachers

Leads to burnout

New teachers need extra support, which taxes senior teachers & leadership

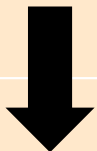
Expensive

Administrative, productivity, and societal costs

Source: *The cost of teacher turnover in Alaska*



The costs of teacher turnover

District administrative costs	Other immediate costs	Long-term costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation • Recruitment • Hiring • Orientation & training 	<p>School costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training & mentorship • Time dedicated to hiring process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher productivity • Student proficiency
 <p>\$20,431.08 per teacher</p>	<p>State costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education • Mentoring • Recruitment 	
	<p>Teacher costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest time and dollars in a degree <p>Community costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members' time 	

Source: *The cost of teacher turnover in Alaska*



Initiatives to retain educators

- Richard Ingersoll: We don't have a supply problem, we have a retention problem.
- Alaska Statewide Mentor Program (ASMP)
- Teacher professional development
 - Alaska Staff Development Network
 - Alaska RTI/MTSS Effective Instruction Conference
 - Alaska Cross-Content Conference



Competitiveness

Compensation (salary & benefits)
Work environment



Compensation needs to to:

1. Recruit the teacher

2. Keep the teacher

And not just any teacher!

A high quality teacher

A good fit for the community



Alaska's teacher salaries

- **Used to be highest in the nation, now 7th**
 - Unadjusted for geographic cost differentials
- **About 10% below where they should be in 2015**
 - Based on our modeling
 - Are almost certainly less competitive now
- **Do not align to the community differentials we calculated**
 - Some districts need to pay much more than they currently do if they wish to attract and retain highly qualified educators



Alaska's teacher benefits

- Vary significantly between districts
- Districts can leverage their resources to offer the benefits that have the most value and utility in their communities
- Tenure is a benefit worth more than \$30,000/year



Source: *Statute and implementation: How phantom policies affect tenure value and support*

Salary & benefits weigh into teacher employment decisions

- Teachers weigh compensation packages when considering
 - Where to work
 - Whether to work as a teacher
 - 22% of Alaska's TEP graduates who don't apply in the Alaska k12 system say they can find better jobs outside of teaching*
 - Preferred work environment
 - More job security
 - Better salary and benefits
- Given Alaska's out-of-state hires, we need to be competitive
 - Within and between Alaska school districts
 - With the packages offered in other states



Source: *Salary & benefits schedule & tenure study*

Working conditions are a stronger predictor of turnover than compensation

School-community relationships

- Community support for the school
- Family and community support for teachers
- Family support for school policies
- School-community communications

Teacher-administration relationships

- Feedback from administrators
- Recognition for their accomplishments
- Assessment of teacher performance

Community characteristics

- Transportation
- Entertainment
- Housing
- Friendships
- Recreation
- Cultural events
- Access to healthcare

Source: *It's more than just dollars: Problematizing salary as the sole mechanism for recruiting & retaining teachers*



Looking ahead



Our context

Teacher turnover is not unique...

- To Alaska
- To the current economic crisis

But we are living in challenging times...

- Typical high demand
- Unprecedented low supply
- Atypical competition



Opportunity: Grow the pipeline

- Support current initiatives
 - Educators Rising
 - Parapro to teacher efforts
- Develop new initiatives
 - Community/tribal-based teacher preparation models
 - Alternative Certification for career changers



Opportunity: Increase competitiveness

- Attractiveness of the profession
- Equitable incentives to teach in different subjects and communities
- Ability to compete in a national market
- Compensation
- Incentives for hard-to-fill positions



Opportunity: Address factors that drive turnover

Working conditions

- School-community relationships
- Administrator quality
- Housing



For more information

Visit our website: iseralaska.org/

Available reports:

- Alaska Native-focused teacher preparation programs: What have we learned?
- Growing our own: Recruiting Alaska's youth and paraprofessionals into teaching
- It's more than just dollars: Problematizing salary as the sole mechanism for recruiting & retaining teachers in rural Alaska
- Recruiting, hiring, and training Alaska's rural teachers: How superintendents practice place-conscious leadership
- Salary & benefits schedule and tenure study
- Statute and implementation: How phantom policies affect tenure value and support
- The cost of teacher turnover in Alaska

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