



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA

Many Traditions One Alaska

Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools 2020

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AS 14.40.190(b)

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AN ACT

A report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the
Board of Regents of the University of Alaska

Prepared by:

Steve Atwater, Executive Dean, Alaska College of Education,
University of Alaska Southeast

Under the direction of:

Pat Pitney, Interim President, University of Alaska
Paul Layer, Vice President of Academics, Students and Research, University of Alaska

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I. Executive Summary

This report responds to AS. 14.40.190 (b), which requires the University of Alaska (UA) Board of Regents to report biennially to the Alaska State Legislature on university efforts to “attract, prepare and retain qualified public-school teachers.” It describes the UA teacher education programs, provides data on teacher education graduates, and discusses initiatives across the UA System to encourage more youth and adults to enter teaching.

- Teacher preparation is one of two UA workforce areas with a metric that the UA Board of Regents track to assess the university’s performance in preparing graduates for the workforce to meet state needs
- UA teacher graduates continue to be rated as “well-prepared” by their principals
- Although there have been historic challenges with education accreditation, President Pitney is giving this good focus. That focus ensures that corrections are being made, that the strength of the remaining programs remain and grow, and that good attention is given to necessary programs in Anchorage. This cumulative effort is ongoing, and remains a focused priority to meet the needs of Alaska's education system. The three UA education units support in-service teachers across Alaska through professional development opportunities
- UA continues to support Educators Rising with activity in more than 20 of the state’s school districts
- Educators Rising Alaska developed the first Educators Rising middle school curriculum in the nation
- This year 158 UA student interns are placed in 39 communities in 20 Alaska school districts
- UAF’s undergraduate initial licensure enrollment has increased 38% in the past five years with the number of Indigenous teacher candidates increasing from 54 to 106
- Overall enrollment in UA’s teacher preparation programs decreased following the discontinuation of UAA’s initial licensure programs but increased at UAF (by 38%) and UAS (by 25%) with UAF offering face-to-face education classes on the UAA campus
- UA is renewing its efforts to recruit students to its teacher preparation programs and the UA Foundation is promoting a culture of education for Alaska that includes placing an emphasis on the importance of teachers
- UA’s Education Programs responded to COVID-19 by placing more emphasis on preparing its candidates to teach virtually and on improving how to remotely supervise and observe interns

II. Introduction

In 2008, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin signed into law AS 14.40.190(b), which requires the University Board of Regents to present to the Alaska State Legislature a report that “describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public-school teachers. The report must include an outline of the university’s current and future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the state and the number of state residents who complete the training.” This report was originally prepared annually from 2009-2013 and now is a biennial report, provided to the legislature not later than day 30 of the regular session, per AS 14.40.190(b).

In the summer of 2016, the University of Alaska identified teacher preparation as one of its two workforce priorities. Later that year in response to this designation, the UA Board of Regents voted to create a single college of education for the UA system. Since then, a series of setbacks and system level modifications have challenged the progress on this very important university and state priority.

- The first of these was in 2017 when the UA Institutions’ accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, advised that the move to one college of education was problematic and would likely not be supported in the identified timeline.
- The second was in the beginning of 2019 when the UAA School of Education lost accreditation for its initial licensure programs. This eliminated UAA’s ability to offer students a pathway to licensure and in turn, led the Board of Regents to discontinue the affected UAA programs. The Board did so with an insistence that students would continue to have face-to-face program options on the UAA campus. The two education units at UAF and UAS were tasked to fill the void with UAF establishing a physical presence on the UAA campus.
- The third was the strain caused by the annual reduction of fiscal support to UA that led to the education units reducing services including recruitment efforts.

In spite of this, there is renewed effort and direction from Interim President Pitney to better define the roles of the units, provide pathways for students in Southcentral Alaska to pursue teaching degrees and to do more to streamline the UA education student experience. The three UA Education units are making improvements to programs and expanding their relationships with Alaska’s school districts.

This report describes UA’s education units’ activity with preparing teachers, summarizes recruitment activity for its teacher preparation programs and its support of retention activity, comments on the impact of COVID-19 on the programs and finally, describes the most recent plans to better define the roles of the UA education units and the relationships of the programs within the UA system.

III. University of Alaska Teacher Preparation

Reorganization of UA's Education Units

The UA system has three education units. The UAF School of Education and the UAS Alaska College of Education offer initial licensure and advanced programs and the UAA School of Education offers advanced programs. Appendix A lists the programs offered at each of these units. The UAS Alaska College of Education continues to assume some UA system level activity through its Executive Dean, Data Manager and Recruiter. The three units' academic programs are independent as is necessitated by the accreditation of the three universities.

UAA's School of Education losing accreditation for its initial licensure programs in January 2019 and the Board of Regents subsequent decision to discontinue all initial licensure programs at UAA effective August 2019, led to UAF and UAS being designated as leads for those discontinued programs. This necessitated all students in the impacted UAA programs to quickly transfer to a UAF or UAS program if they wanted to receive a degree from UA that would guarantee licensure in Alaska. Faculty and staff at all three institutions worked to assist as many students as possible. Some students also switched majors to stay at UAA, transferred to universities outside the UA system, or chose not to enroll in Fall 2019. Some of those students who did not enroll in 2019 have enrolled in Fall 2020.

In response to the changes at UAA, UAF established office space and classes in the University Lake Building on the UAA campus to support initial licensure programs face-to-face in Anchorage. Both UAS and UAF continued to make their online programs available to students and saw a significant increase in enrollment by southcentral area students. This increase is detailed in Table 1 when comparing 2018 student locations with the 2020 student locations.

Table 1. UA Education Student Location						
	UAA		UAF		UAS	
Location	Fall 2018	Fall 2020	Fall 2018	Fall 2020	Fall 2018	Fall 2020
Far North	12	5	14	15	5	6
Interior	47	15	158	149	31	28
Southcentral	431	65	40	108	104	135
Southeast	14	5	27	20	81	80
Southwest	51	28	57	62	23	41
Out of State/unknown	51	13	38	40	26	28
Total	606	131	334	394	270	318

UA Teacher Preparation in 2020

Alaskans have multiple pathways for how to prepare to be a teacher. UAF and UAS offer BA and graduate programs. Candidates with a bachelor's degree can complete the requirements to be eligible for teaching license in less than 11 months. Teachers with a certificate who want to add an endorsement (e.g., special education) can do so at all three universities. Students who want an Early Childhood endorsement can do so at UAF by adding a minor in this area to their BA in Elementary Education degree. Both UAA and UAF continue to offer AAS degrees in Early Childhood.

The units have good relationships with school districts across Alaska and this year, placed or will place their interns in more than 39 Alaska communities (see appendix B). Furthermore, the ability to complete the coursework by distance for most of the programs allows place-bound students to complete their degrees without leaving their home communities.

UAF and UAS recruitment and innovation led to enrollment gains at these two units (see Table 2). The UA system is in a period of adjustment and expects the number of prepared teachers to steadily increase. Of interest, is the percent of new to teaching hires in Alaska of UA graduates was about the same in 2020 as it was in 2019 (see table 3). The recruitment section of this report provides more detail on this activity.

UA education units continue to make regular improvements with UAF showing a 38% increase of students enrolled in its undergraduate initial licensure programs and UAS's education unit seeing an overall enrollment increase of 25%. A further limiting factor for meeting the teacher needs of Alaska's public schools is that more than a third of the graduating teachers choose not to teach in Alaska's public schools following graduation (see table 4).

As noted, not all education graduates take teaching jobs. However, 82% of the graduates do work in Alaska in the education field in their first year following graduation. Table 5 shows the distribution of where in Alaska the 2010-20 UA education graduates work. (Education Hiring and UA Graduates, 2020).

Table 2. First-Time Initial Licensure Completers					
	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
UAA	93	88	100	61	15
UAF	35	55	56	59	63
UAS	71	78	83	66	81
UA Total	199	221	239	186	159

Note: This table shows the number of unduplicated individuals who first qualified for an initial teaching certificate (graduated from one of the programs listed in Appendix A) in the reported year. Individuals who earned two degrees that lead to initial licensure (e.g. Graduate Certificate and Master's Degree) are only counted once, in the year they earned their first qualifying degree/certificate.

Table 3. Number of Newly-Hired Teachers in Alaska Public Schools					
	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
# New Teachers Hired*	574	367	366	386	296
# UA Alumni Hired**	249	138	177	186	139
% of New to the Profession Hires that are UA Alumni	43%	38%	48%	48%	47%

Source: Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) certified staff database and RPTP.DSDMGR (dsd_degrees).

****New" includes records marked as 'New to Profession.' "Teacher" includes the following job categories, as defined by DEED: Remedial Specialist, Head Teacher, Teacher, Visiting or Itinerant Teacher, Special Education Teacher, English as a Second Language Teacher, On-site Supervising Teacher, Correspondence Teacher, Online Course Facilitator Teacher and Associate Teacher.*

***Records from the DEED database were matched with UA dsd_degrees using SSN, or name and DOB when SSN was missing. Report years correspond to the DEED academic year of hire (not the year the UA alumni completed). "UA Alumni Hired" could include alumni who graduated from any year and any UA program.*

Table 4. Employment of UA Initial Licensure Program Completers in Alaska K-12 Schools

	Academic Year of Employment in AK K-12 Schools					Not Employed in AK Public Schools at Any Time Following Graduation
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
FY 2015 Grads	57%	65%	65%	64%	61%	23%
FY 2016 Grads		53%	61%	58%	59%	25%
FY 2017 Grads			57%	62%	60%	26%
FY 2018 Grads				67%	64%	26%
FY 2019 Grads					63%	37%

Source: Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) certified staff database and RPTP.DSDMGR (dsd_degrees).

Table 5. Region of Alaska where UA Education Program Completers (2010-20) are working

Region	Share of Completers
Anchorage / Mat-Su	49.7%
Interior	17.6%
Southeast	12.7%
Gulf Coast	9%
Southwest	6.8%
Northern	4.2%

Quality Assurance

Through regulation, the Department of Education and Early Development requires Alaska's education units to receive accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Table 6 shows the CAEP accreditation status for the three UA units. Although there have been historic challenges with education accreditation, President Pitney and the units are giving this appropriate focus. That focus ensures that corrections are being made, that the strength of the remaining programs remain and grow, and that good attention is given to necessary programs in Anchorage. A central part of this accreditation is the education unit implementing a system for quality assurance. This system includes required attention to the completers' impact on student learning and processes for ensuring collection and review of data on program activity (e.g., how the unit selects its host teachers). An important source of data for the units are the four surveys created by the Network for Excellence in Teaching (NExT). These nationally normed surveys are administered by the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research a unit within the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at UAA. The education units use the survey results and other collected data to drive improvement efforts. For example, NExT survey data led them to place an increased emphasis on preparing teachers to work with children for whom English is a second language. The Supervisor Survey completed by the new hires' principals, consistently shows that the UA teacher graduates are well prepared for their teaching positions. Table 7 shows a sample of the survey items and the percent of principals who tend to agree or agree with the statement.

Table 6. UA Education Units Licensure Programs and CAEP Accreditation Status			
UA Education Unit	Date of CAEP Review	Status of Initial Licensure Programs	Status of Advanced Programs
UAA School of Education	April 2018	Accreditation Revoked	Advanced Programs reviewed Spring 2021
UAF School of Education	April 2018	Full Accreditation until Spring 2024	Advanced Programs reviewed Spring 2021
UAS Alaska College of Education	November 2019	Full Accreditation until Spring 2025	Full Accreditation until Spring 2025

Table 7: NExT Transition to Teaching Survey (completed by principals supervising new UA teacher graduates) n=83

Item	Tend to Agree (percent)	Agree (percent)	Total of Tend to Agree and Agree (percent)
Effectively teaches the subject matter in his/her licensure area.	23.17	71.95	95.12
Selects instructional strategies to align with curriculum standards.	29.27	62.2	91.47
Account for students' prior knowledge or experiences in instructional planning.	36.59	56.1	92.69
Regularly adjust instructional plans to meet students' needs.	24.39	67.07	91.46
Plan lessons with clear learning objectives/goals in mind.	19.51	70.73	90.24
Designs and modifies assessments to match learning objectives.	36.25	55.0	91.25
Uses digital and interactive technologies to achieve instructional learning goals	35.00	61.25	95.25

IV. Recruitment

There remains an urgent need to recruit more Alaskans to the teaching profession and to slow teacher turnover. Not only is there a significant need to replace teachers leaving the teaching profession with new teachers, more than 20% of the state's teachers do not return to the same job each year (Vazquez et al. 2019), The University of Alaska is devoting resources to both areas by supporting strategies that will increase teacher retention (e.g., the mentoring of early career teachers), hiring a recruiter for teacher preparation programs and supporting career-pathways for high school students to the teaching profession. Each of these strategies is described in the following sections of the report.

Recruiting Students to UA Education Programs

Despite the positive enrollment increases at UAF and UAS, the total number of students enrolling in UA teacher preparation programs declined for the past four years (see table 8).

This decline mirrors the national downward trend in enrollment in teacher preparation programs. This decline combined with the high turnover of Alaska's teachers (see table 9) and fewer teachers from the lower forty-eight interested in teaching in Alaska is making it more and more difficult for the state's school districts to fill their teacher vacancies. It should also be noted that the enrollment decline is similar to the overall decline in UA enrollment

Table 8. Fall Enrollment by Primary Major

	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
UAA	706	675	694	606	134	131
Non-Licensure	40	40	41	31	41	37
Advanced	175	131	149	101	77	85
Initial Licensure	462	474	474	440	3	2
Mixed Initial/Advanced	29	30	30	34	13	7
UAF	329	391	354	334	421	394
Advanced	125	131	116	117	141	129
Initial Licensure	204	260	238	217	280	265
UAS	316	326	283	270	311	318
Advanced	111	103	89	74	77	84
Initial Licensure	205	223	194	196	234	234
Total	1351	1392	1331	1210	866	843

Table 9. School Turnover Rates for Teachers and Principals.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Teachers	21%	21%	22%	24%	21%	22%
Principals	24%	28%	29%	33%	23%	25%

Source: Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest, "Educator Retention and Turnover under the Midnight Sun," (September 2019).

UA recruiter

When UA created the Alaska College of Education it offered the College new fiscal support that included funds for a recruiter. The recruiter is the point person for the UA system to promote UA's education programs to prospective students. The recruiter attends college fairs, speaks to high school students and other groups that have influence in this area (e.g., the Association of Alaska School Boards) and will be a key person in maintaining a UA education website and a social media presence that will help guide prospective students to the various UA education program options.

UA Foundation

Under the direction of former UA President Johnsen, the UA Foundation began to explore what it could do to help grow a culture of education in Alaska. Included with this work is creating a state level understanding that such a culture is partially dependent on well-prepared K-12 teachers. The Foundation is now designing a fundraising campaign that will in part, help to socially elevate the teaching profession. It is assumed that such a change will help to recruit more students to UA's education programs who will in turn, stay longer in the profession in Alaska than their peers who were prepared out-of-state (Hill, A. and Hirshberg, D. 2013). Also of note, is that UA prepared teachers more readily use the Alaska context in their instruction to enhance student learning. The campaign recognizes that its strategy in this area should be bifurcated to affect areas that will provide both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to becoming a teacher.

Alaska Native Teachers

Alaska Natives make up more than 20% of the state's K-12 enrollment but constitute only 5% of its teachers. About ten percent of the enrollment in UA's teacher preparation programs is by Alaska Native students with a small number of degrees and certificates awarded to this group each year (see table 10). Through grant activity, fiscal support and program design, the UA education units are actively recruiting Alaska Native students to their teacher preparation programs.

Alaska Indigenous Corps

UAF's new Sustaining Indigenous and Local Knowledge, Arts and Teaching (SILKAT) grant introduces a series of Alaska Indigenous Teacher Initiatives. The Alaska Indigenous Teacher Corps was started in 2018-2019 using a cohort model with designated faculty and advising to support Alaska Native students pursuing teaching degrees from high school through to degree completion. In the next grant, UAF was invited to scale up its efforts in preparing and graduating Indigenous teachers for Alaska's schools. In addition to expanding resources for the Alaska Indigenous Teacher Corps, it will form an Alaskan Indigenous Teacher Network working to support Indigenous educational leaders and facilitate post-graduation community building and professional development.

Alaska Indigenous Teacher Alliances

The UAF School of Education is also developing regional Alaska Indigenous Teacher Alliances (AITA) comprised of tribal organizations, businesses, school districts, the UAF School of Education, and UAF Rural Campuses. The drive for gathering these alliances is to establish teacher preparation strategies that reflect Indigenous and local priorities and identify partnerships to fund local teacher preparation and certification. UAF's undergraduate initial licensure programs currently enroll more than 130 Alaska Native students, a growth of more than 100% since 2015.

PITAAS

The Preparing Indigenous Teachers & Administrators for Alaska's Schools Program (PITAAS) is an Alaska Native Education & Equity Program grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education. PITAAS is a partnership between the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) and the Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI). Five PITAAS scholars graduated in the Spring and Summer 2020 terms (2 M.Ed. Educational Leadership, 1 Superintendent Endorsement, 1 B.L.A. Alaska Native Language & Studies, and 1 Bachelor of Arts Elementary Education). This fall, PITAAS is funding 25 students (12 undergraduates and 13 graduate students). This is the most students yet in this current grant iteration (2018–2021). Since inception of the PITAAS program there have been 206 graduates, including licenses, certificates AA, AS, BA, and Master degrees. In addition, there are four (4) Superintendent Endorsements. PITAAS graduates are employed in 28 of 54 Alaska School Districts.

Table 10. Number of Degrees Awarded to Alaska Natives in Initial Licensure Programs

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
UAA	8 (9%)	5 (5%)	10 (10%)	2 (3%)	1 (6%)
UAF	3 (9%)	4 (7%)	6 (11%)	5 (8%)	4 (7%)
UAS	6 (7%)	7 (8%)	10 (11%)	14 (14%)	5 (5%)
UA Total	17 (8%)	16 (7%)	26 (10%)	21 (9%)	10 (6%)

Educators Rising

One of the more encouraging developments with recruiting students to the UA teacher preparation programs has been the expansion of Educators Rising Alaska. Educators Rising is a national organization that orients students to the teaching profession through coursework and field experience. This coursework is aligned with the UAS introduction to education class for a dual enrollment opportunity. Educators Rising Alaska now has school level activity in more than 20 districts. Of note, is the development of a middle school curriculum for Educators Rising Alaska that is being piloted this year and will be available for all the districts in September. This is the first Educators Rising middle school curriculum in the country. Both UAF and the UAS Alaska College of Education support Educators Rising activity.

UAA 2 + 2

In a deliberate effort to rebuild and expand enrollment in teacher education in Southcentral Alaska, UAA has a direct pathway for new undergraduate students interested in teaching preparation by entering an UAA Associate of Arts degree and then transferring to UAF or UAS to complete the degree requirements of a BA in elementary or special education. UAF offers face-to-face education classes on the UAA campus as part of their BA in Elementary Education Program, thus allowing a four year on UAA campus experience. This 2+2 pathway is also being incorporated into the UA middle colleges advising process.

UAF School of Education Physical Upgrade

For decades, pre-service teacher education students at UAF have studied in two classrooms housed at an old elementary school located three quarters of a mile from the main Troth Yeddha' campus. Aligning with the goals of modernizing the student experience, cementing leadership in Alaska Native and Indigenous programs, and revitalizing key academic programs, the UAF School of Education pursued avenues for developing a collaborative, modern learning space that will

demonstrate to prospective and current students the value and respect of a career in education. With generous funds from Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, the UAF School of Education developed the Alaska Future Teacher Space on the 7th floor of the Gruening Building adjacent to the School of Education faculty and advisor offices. This new collaborative learning space includes a multi-use classroom, a study lounge, and a renovated entry area totaling over 1900 square feet. When all students are able to return to campus, these spaces will be utilized for teaching early sequence teacher education courses, hosting School of Education meeting and events, and facilitating cohort building for the Alaska Indigenous Teacher Corps.

V. Retention

Although helping to retain teachers in the state's K-12 system is not one of UA's immediate functions, the university has for several years supported Alaska's early career teachers through the Alaska Statewide Mentoring Project. In addition, UA's advanced programs and professional development support for in-service teachers serves to help with teacher retention. The following sections of the report provide a summary of this activity.

Alaska Statewide Mentoring Project

Research performed by the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research found that Alaska prepared teachers remain in the teaching profession in Alaska longer than those teachers prepared out of state (Hill, A. and Hirshberg, D. 2013). It is also known that support of early career teachers has a positive effect on teacher retention. For the past four years, the University of Alaska has done this by supporting the Alaska Statewide Mentoring Project (ASMP). ASMP provides personalized mentoring to new early career teachers. A randomized controlled trial of ASMP found that mentoring had a positive effect on student performance and teacher retention (see Adams, 2010 and Findlay, 2016).

Table 11. 2018-20 ASMP Mentors and Number of Early Career Teachers Served

School Year	# Mentors	# ECTs served
2020-2021	13	126
2019-2020	13	140
2018-2019	15	151

SILKAT

In November 2020, the UAF School of Education was awarded a \$3 Million three-year grant to continue its work on the Sustaining Indigenous Local Knowledge, Arts, and Teaching (SILKAT) initiative. The SILKAT project addresses the broad issue of Alaskan teacher recruitment and retention by supporting the recruitment of local teachers and providing preservice and early career teachers with training in teaching through arts and culture.

In the previous five years of SILKAT efforts, the UAF School of Education has partnered with the Bering Strait School District (BSSD) to help paraprofessionals in BSSD attain teaching licenses, and to collaboratively design teacher-led professional development opportunities for early career teachers. A major outcome from these efforts has been the development of core practices for culturally responsive teaching and arts and culture units for grades K-12. These core practices and units were collaboratively developed by participating teachers and faculty. The core practice framework has guided professional development initiatives and been integrated into coursework for preservice teachers. In the past three years, over 150 teachers in BSSD schools have participated in a course to develop their ability to teach in a way that reflects and collaborates with their respective communities.

Looking forward to the next three years, the UAF School of Education will continue to partner with the BSSD and expand partnership to the Northwest Arctic School District. These collaborative partnerships will continue SILKAT initiatives for the recruitment and retention of teachers versed in culturally responsive education through recruiting local teachers, providing scholarships, and offering arts and culture training to preservice and early career teachers.

Local Knowledge Educator Certificate

Another effort to boost retention in undergraduate programs, particularly with the Alaska Native student population is the creation of a “Local Knowledge Educator” certificate at UAF. The Local Knowledge Educator Program is a 30 credit undergraduate certificate program intended to provide individuals interested in the teaching profession with a benchmark credential that will set them on a path to a Bachelors in Elementary or Secondary Education. 27-30 of the credits in the certificate program will apply to the Elementary BA degree, or 18 of the credits will apply to a Secondary BA degree.

The coursework in the Local Knowledge Educator certificate program represents a collection of courses that have low barriers to entry (no prerequisites), fulfill the General University Requirements for a certificate program, and provide an individual interested in working in a non-certificated K-12 based position (e.g. as a substitute teacher or a paraprofessional) with a strong introduction to the teaching profession and content knowledge relevant to work in a school context. The collection of classes can both enhance individual knowledge of Alaska and Alaska's Indigenous cultures, as well as equip future educators with tools that will help them incorporate their own local knowledge into K-12 classrooms now and in the future.

PACE

Alaska's school districts offer their teachers a myriad of professional development opportunities and view this activity as a way to help retain their teachers. The UAA School of Education's Office of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) facilitates professional development opportunities for educators and other service professionals. PACE works closely with many of the state's school districts to provide responsive service and support for 500-level courses, workshops, conferences, institutes, and academies.

In the past year, PACE supported professional training for over 2,880 educators in Anchorage and across the state, representing almost 35% of Alaska's public school teachers. Through active partnerships with the Anchorage School District and other focused professional organizations and school districts, the UAA School of Education generated an average of 211 full time equivalent (FTE) students in each semester and summer session. UA's two other education units also support 500 level courses offered to inservice teachers.

Table 12. PACE Facilitated Course Enrollment 2016-2020

	AY 2016	AY 2017	AY 2018	AY 2019	AY 2020	% increase from 2016 to 2020
Headcount (non-duplicated)	2,867	3,510	3,725	3,963	4,532	+58%
Enrollments	4,737	5,783	5,982	6,695	8,409	+77%
Credit hours	6,302	8,097	8,543	10,758	13,155	+108%
Sections of courses	394	415	545	689	679	+72%

Advanced Courses

Each of the UA Education Units offers graduate programs and courses, many of which are taken by in-service teachers. Completion of most of the programs leads to eligibility for an additional endorsement (e.g., special education). Beginning in Fall 2021, all UA system education programs lead to licensure or additional endorsements, except UAA's Teaching and Learning Program which leads to a Master's in Education.

UAA Partnership Pilot Project

In order to promote retention, recruitment and culturally responsive teaching, UAA joined with the superintendents from Bristol Bay Borough, Dillingham City, Lake and Peninsula Borough and Southwest Region School Districts to begin (Fall 2020) an innovative pilot project that combines traditional university course work with experiential learning. The experiential learning component of the program is designed by the superintendents, comprises 50% of the total credits of the degree and is offered at reduced tuition. In order to receive credit for the experiential learning component, teachers must complete three years with the district. Upon successful completion of the required coursework and the experiential learning piece, students are awarded the M. Ed. in Culturally Responsive Teaching. Seventeen students from these four districts were fully admitted to the program in the fall of 2020. Partner superintendents will use this graduate study opportunity as a recruitment tool again in 2021 and UAA will accept a second cohort of students. An evaluation of the program will begin in spring of 2021 and will include its impact on retention and evaluation.

VI. Changing World of Teacher Preparation

The COVID pandemic has impacted Alaska's PK-12 education system in an unprecedented way. From closing schools to moving all school district activity online, educating our state's children and young adults has never been more challenging. Although little public attention is given to the pandemic's impact on preservice teachers, it has been significant. The UA programs have been forced to modify the internship or student teaching experience and are now more reliant on virtual observation and virtual support of their teacher candidates. Traditional placement of interns into a classroom is no longer a given, with some candidates never physically meeting their host teacher or the students.

In response to the pandemic, the programs are placing more emphasis on virtual teaching techniques including how to manage a virtual classroom. Various online teaching applications (e.g., Flipgrid, Padlet, Nearpod) are introduced to the preservice students who are then using them during their instruction. UAF School of Education created a website to support the interns as they navigate the two worlds of virtual and face-to-face teaching. In some cases, the UA student intern's good understanding of the technology used in virtual teaching and is an asset that supports the host teacher.

Although the pandemic forced the UA programs to exclusively offer online instruction, the pivot to do so, was not that difficult because the majority of the programs' instruction was already virtual. After successfully shifting a portion of their program online, two UAS programs decided to no longer include a face-to-face component. With this as an example, it is likely that the pandemic will serve to increase the number of students taking courses online and there will not be a full return to the same level of face-to-face education courses that were offered before the pandemic.

VII. Looking Ahead

With the ongoing need to prepare more teachers, Interim President Pitney initiated system level activity to gain a greater level of coordination and engagement of the education programs across the system. The initial activity is focused in three areas: one, communicating clear pathways for each program within a unified coordinated view; two, developing a coordinated website and a campaign to advertise the programs; and three, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the coordinating entity and school/program structures. At the time of this writing, work in each of these areas is just beginning with recommendations to be made in spring 2021. An update on the progress of this work will be included with the report's presentation to the legislature

VIII. Summary

In 2016 UA identified teacher preparation as one of its two workforce areas with a Board of Regents set target to increase teacher education graduates. Since then, there have been significant internal and external disruptions. In spite of this, the cycle of Alaska K-12 graduates enrolling in UA teacher preparation programs and then returning as teachers in the state's K-12 system continues to be a primary focus. UA's renewed multi-prong effort to recruit students to its teacher preparation programs and its continued innovative work at the unit level, will help to secure more teacher candidates. The internal functions of the education units are sound, as affirmed by their accreditation status, with teaching candidates receiving guidance and support during their preparation programs, and once graduated, receiving acknowledgement from their principals that they are well prepared to be a teacher. The external limitation of the teaching profession losing some of its appeal as a profession in Alaska and nationally, is one that the university is addressing through its Foundation's campaign that in part, will promote a culture of education for the state. Included with this culture is the need to appreciate and value teachers. It is important that Alaska leaders in industry, K-12 and higher education, and state and local government do more to recognize the importance of teaching. Doing so will help provide future teachers the needed intrinsic motivation to pursue the profession.

IX. References

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Appendix A. University of Alaska Programs for Education

Teacher Education Program Offerings					
Track	Program	Degree	UAA	UAF	UAS
Non-Licensure	Early Childhood	A.A.S.	Yes	Yes	
		Undergrad Cert		Yes	
Initial Licensure	Early Childhood	B.A.	X		
		P-B/Grad Cert	X		
	Elementary	B.A.	X	Yes	Yes
		P-B/Grad Cert	X	Yes	Yes
		M.A.T.			Yes
	Secondary	B.A.		Yes	
		Undergrad PostBacc		Yes	
		P-B/Grad Cert		Yes	Yes
		M.A.T.	X		Yes
	Special Ed	B.A.			Yes
		P-B/Grad Cert		Yes	
		M.A.T.			Yes
	K-12 Art	Undergrad Post-Bacc		Yes	
		P-B/Grad Cert		Yes	
	Music Ed	B.M.	Yes	Yes	

Track	Program	Degree	UAA	UAF	UAS
Advanced Programs Teaching	Early Childhood Special Ed	M.Ed.	Yes*		
	Elementary	M.Ed.		Yes	
	Secondary	M.Ed.		Yes	
	Special Ed	P-B/Grad Cert	Yes*	Yes	Yes
		M.Ed.	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Reading Specialist	P-B/Grad Cert			Yes
		M.Ed.			Yes
	Math Ed	P-B/Grad Cert			X
		M.Ed.			X
	Cross Cultural Education	M.Ed.		X	
	Curriculum and Instruction	M.Ed.		X	
	Teaching and Learning	M.Ed.	Yes		
	Language and Literacy	M.Ed.		X	
	Language Ed ESL/ELL	P-B/Grad Cert	Yes		

Track	Program	Degree	UAA	UAF	UAS
Advanced Programs School Services/ Administration	Counseling	P-B/Grad Cert	X	Yes	
		M.Ed.	X	Yes	
	Ed Leadership (Principal)	P-B/Grad Cert	Yes		
		M.Ed.	Yes		Yes
	Superintendent	Non-Degree			Yes

Programs that are currently offered are designated by cells filled in blue. Programs designated with “X” (in table above) are no longer offered by that institution—however, degrees/certificates have been conferred for these programs in the last 3 years. Programs designated by cells filled in gray are offered at that institution by an academic unit other than the respective school of education.

*UAA’s Special Ed Post-Bacc and Early Childhood Special Ed MED have both initial and advanced licensure tracks, but the initial tracks were discontinued.

Appendix B: Location and number of UA Teaching Interns for 2020-21

Community	Total
Anchorage	40
Bethel	6
Big Lake	1
Chugiak	2
Dillingham	1
Eagle River	2
Eielson	1
Elemendorf	1
Fairbanks	20
Fort Yukon	1
Glenallen	1
Girdwood	1
Homer	2

Hughes	1
Juneau	8
Kasilof	1
Kenai	1
Ketchikan	2
King Cove	2
Kodiak	9
Koliganek	1
Kotzebue	1
Koyuk	1
Metlakatla	1
Nenana	1
Newhalen	1
Noorvik	1

North Pole	4
Nunapitchuk	1
Oscarville	1
Palmer	5
Quinhagak	1
Soldotna	3
Stebbins	1
Tok	1
Unalaska	2
Utqiagvik	1
Wasilla	8
Wrangell	2
Placed in Spring	18
Total	158