

**TYPES OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ALASKA** (Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Website: <https://education.alaska.gov/compass/ParentPortal/ExploreOptions>)

**Traditional Public Schools**

Traditional public schools are learning institutions that are funded by local, state and/or federal governments. Traditional public schools serve the majority of students in the local community for their primary and secondary education. They offer general education opportunities to children in kindergarten through grade 12, and extracurricular activities are also part of many public school programs. Traditional schools are divided into grades and governed by local school districts.

How does it work? Students are assigned a school based on where they live and what grade they are in. Bus transportation is provided to and from the school. Some local communities offer high school choice for students.

**Correspondence Schools**

State-funded public correspondence schools are established by Alaska school districts for families who choose to homeschool their children, and for high school students learning independently. Public correspondence school programs may be available statewide, offer multiple enrollment options, and offer curriculum choices to personalize education to an individual child's needs.

How does it work? A student funding allotment is provided, which is an amount of money that the correspondence program spends on the family's behalf or allows the family to spend for all of the educational-related needs of the student. This allotment can pay for items such as a student's books, classes, school supplies, technology support, tutoring, music or activity lessons, and other items related to the student's education.

**Charter Schools**

Alaska established charter school legislation in 1995 in response to requests from parents and teachers for more educational choices for their students. Charter programs provide the opportunity to offer educational programs customized specifically to the community. Charter programs can offer new and often unique options for parental choice in the education of their children.

How does it work? In Alaska, charter schools are started by a founding group at the local level. A charter school can be designated to serve students within a certain age group or grade level, and students who will benefit from a particular teaching method or curriculum. The charter school and local school board define the age groups or grade levels and who will benefit from the program.

**Vocational Education Schools**

Vocational schools, sometimes referred to as trade schools or career schools, offer career and technical education programs to high school students that help prepare them for both career options and post-secondary education and training. Vocational schools may offer training in trades like carpentry and culinary arts. They can also feature programs in fields such as health care and technology. Vocational schools often focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) courses, and many offer dual credit with local post-secondary education institutions - this allows students to complete high school

graduation requirements while also earning college credits. Vocational education may be a good option for high school students who like hands-on, “real world” learning.

How does it work? A vocational school can be designated to serve students within a certain age group or grade level, and often focus on serving high school students. The vocational school and local school board define the age groups or grade levels, and determine the enrollment policy. A written application or lottery system are two examples of current enrollment practices for vocational schools in Alaska.

### **Alternative Schools**

Alternative schools support students who need help finding a different path to academic success that may not be found in a traditional school setting. Alternative schools most commonly support students who are significantly behind in course credit. Staff work with students to develop an individualized learning and graduation plan to meet the student’s unique needs.

How does it work? An alternative school can be designated to serve students within a certain age group or grade level, and often focus on serving high school students. A student typically must apply to attend the alternative school.

Alternative schools in Alaska include youth facilities that support youth toward leading a successful and crime-free life. Educational services in youth facilities are provided by the local school district.

### **Residential Schools**

Residential schools offer students access to academic and extra-curricular opportunities in a residential setting that are unavailable to students in their home schools and communities.

How does it work? Residential schools typically serve students of high school age. Students must apply to the school and demonstrate their interest in learning and capability of living successfully in a residential setting. The residential school pays for transportation costs for the student to attend school from their home community.