



# IDEA Homeschool

## Interior Distance Education of Alaska Galena City School District

System for School Success: School of Universal Support  
Accreditation through Cognia (formerly AdvancED)



Thank you for inviting IDEA to share.  
We are looking forward to covering IDEA's...

- **Our Service to Alaska** — a brief context for the issues we will present today
- **Challenges and Opportunities** — unfunded obligations and prospects
- **Call to Action**



#### CORE VALUES

At IDEA we believe **we are in the business of empowering parents** by providing educational support and customized opportunities that serve the unique needs of each child.

**Our true purpose is creating a network of support** within a framework of integrity and high standards that serves, empowers and validates parents in their educational choices.

To achieve this, we believe that **families should always get more of the following than they expect:**

- Choices, opportunities, & resources
- Mentorship, guidance, & advocacy
- Caring relationships
- Timely attention to detail
- Knowledge & expertise

**We also believe that all involved with the education of our students are part of the network of support.**

**That's why we treat our coworkers, vendors, service providers, families, friends, etc., with the same level of integrity, high standards, empowerment and validation.**

# IDEA exists to serve Alaska students

- **Honor parent rights and choice** in educating their children.
- ***Individualize education*** to meet *student needs* in a *homeschool setting*.
- **Support parents** in homeschooling by coming alongside the family in partnership and relationship.

Each parent helps us learn about the student, and we can help parents...

- Enhance that formative understanding
- Support parent and student planning and goal-setting
- Identify curricular supports, resources, instructional strategies, and interventions
- Create opportunities for learning, collaboration, and educational community
- Help students find success in life—in many forms!



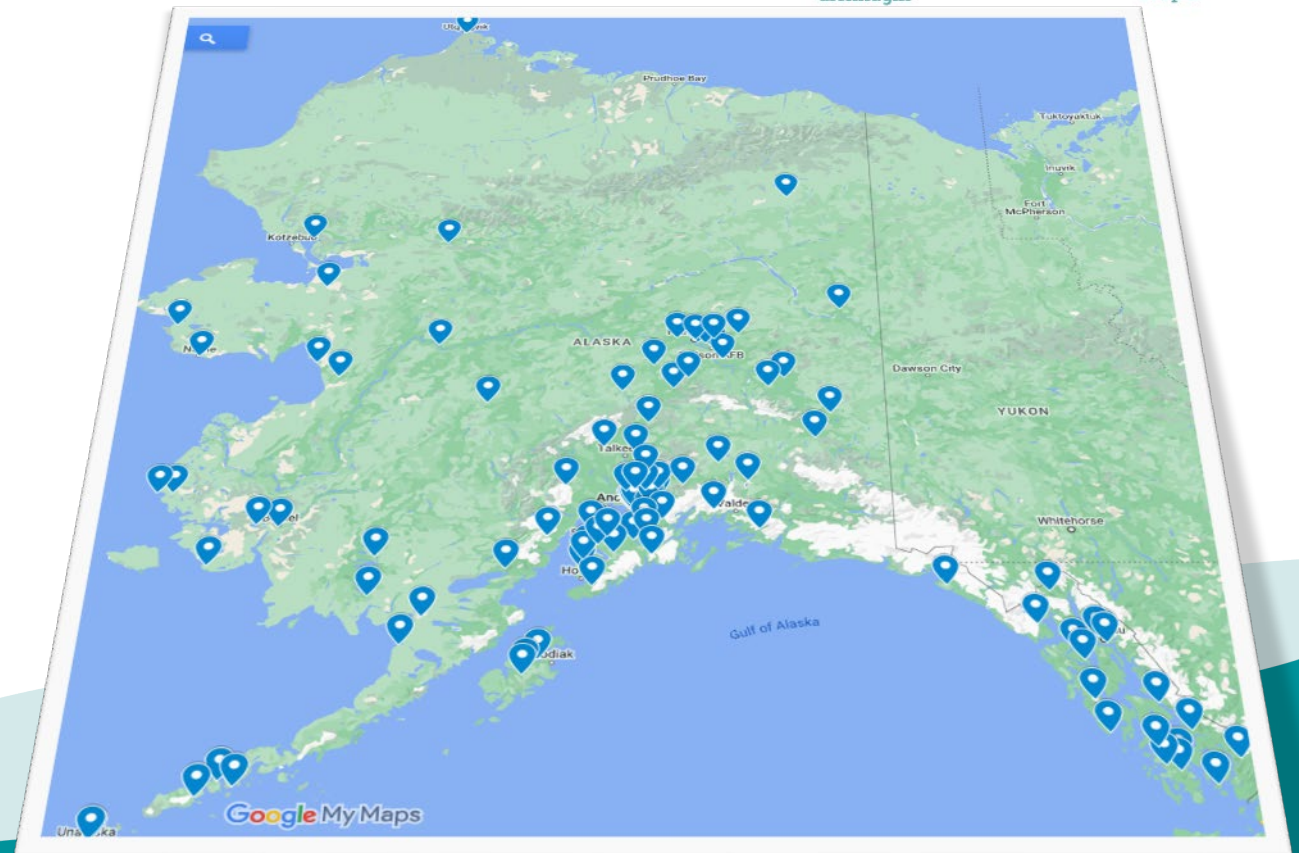
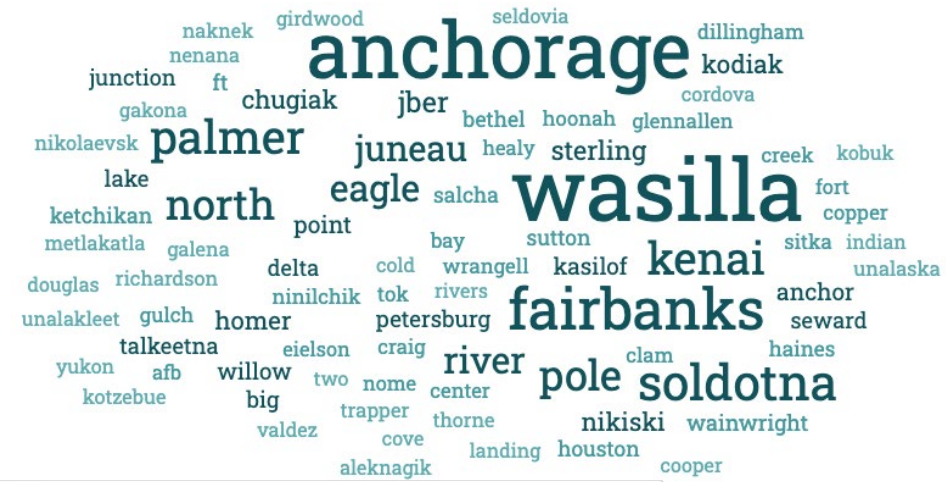


# Service to Alaska

IDEA is a public school.  
We are a school of choice.

IDEA serves approx. 6,700 students living in 111 communities, and we do so from six regional offices.

- **Region A/GA – Anchorage**  
Including rural communities with an Anchorage hub
- **Region ER – Eagle River**
- **Region F/GF – Fairbanks**  
Including rural communities with a Fairbanks hub
- **Region K/GK – Kenai Peninsula**  
Including Kodiak, Seward, Homer
- **Region MS – Wasilla/MatSu Valley**
- **Region SE – Juneau**  
Including rural southeast communities



# Service to Alaska

## IN EACH OF OUR FACILITIES, WE PROVIDE:

- Certified Contact Teachers and private meeting spaces
  - Libraries, curriculum resource rooms and Resource Room Coordinators
  - Public spaces for clubs, activities and educational community events
  - Tech departments and tech support
  - Field Representatives to support enrollment, advocacy and event planning
  - Parent Advisory Committees
- Classified staff (receptionists, coaches and/or administrative) to support general needs
  - Certified Special Education Teachers, and special education services: Consultation on interventions and tools; evaluations by school psychologists; speech/language pathologists; occupational therapies; arrangements for physical therapies and counseling
  - Site Administrators
  - More...

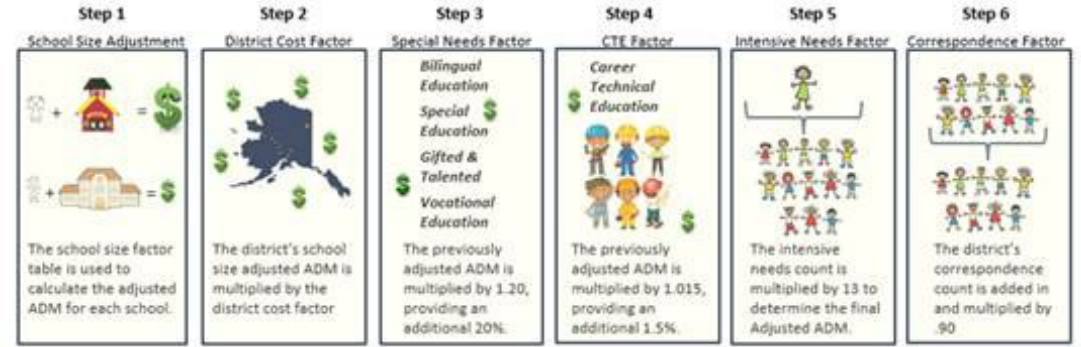


# Challenges & Opportunities

**IDEA receives only 90%** of what is normally considered the ‘minimum’ or Base Student Allocation. We do not receive school size adjustment, district cost factors, special needs factors, or CTE factors.

## UNFUNDED OBLIGATIONS: CURRENT AND EXPECTED

- Special education
- Testing expenses
- Facilities
- MAP Growth as a mandated test (coming soon)
- AK Reads Act mandates (coming soon)





# Special Education

**Seven school districts, with support from even more, signed a resolution to address an important discrepancy in special education. (See appendix.)**

To borrow language from yet another supportive district (ASD and Dr. Parker):

- *Alaska regulation 4 AAC 33.432 appropriately requires that correspondence schools enroll special education students on the same basis as brick-and-mortar students.*
- *Districts with correspondence schools have the responsibility to serve correspondence students with identified disabilities with the same level of support as students with identified disabilities attending brick-and-mortar schools, yet no additional instructional monies are provided to help offset these responsibilities.*
- *No school is allowed to refuse a free and appropriate public education to a student based on a disability.*

# Special Education

IDEA receives no special needs factor funding, but must live into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and provide a free and appropriate public education.

## IDEA Homeschool serves...

- 450 special needs students (2022-2023)

## Put in perspective...

- Of the 54 school districts in Alaska:
  - 30 of those districts have a total enrollment (regular and special education) of fewer than 450 students.



*The number of special needs students in IDEA is greater than the total enrollment for many individual school districts in Alaska.*



# Special Education

IDEA receives no special needs factor funding, but must live into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and provide a free and appropriate public education.

## IDEA HOMESCHOOL PROVIDES:

- *Certified Special Education Staff—to develop IEP's (together with parents and certified staff) and provide ongoing consultation, interventions, tools and support*
- *School psychologists*
- *Speech/language pathologists*
- *Occupational therapists*
- *Physical therapy*
- *Mental health services*
- *Classified special education record keepers*
- *Significant ongoing support from our regular education certified and classified staff*

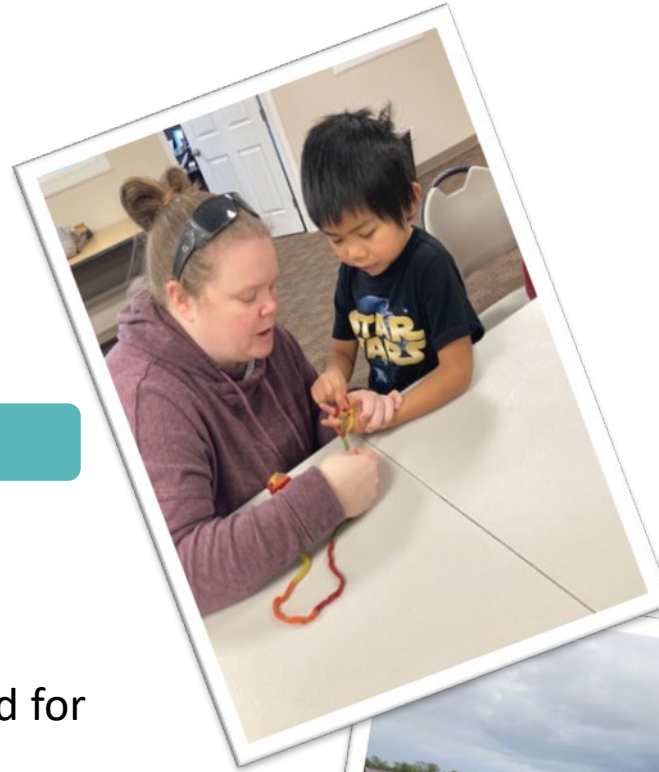
# Testing Expenses

## IN OUR DISTRICT'S *BRICK & MORTAR* SCHOOLS...

- Classroom space is already available for testing
- The schedule allows for testing to be absorbed
- The students have equipment that can be secured for this purpose
- The staff is available for training

Testing for our brick and mortar schools is often a matter of putting pen to paper for some planning.

However, in correspondence programs...



# Testing Expenses

## HOWEVER, IN CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS...

- IDEA serves 111 communities, with dozens that have test-age students.
- Very few local schools are still in a position to welcome IDEA students for testing. (Staffing shortages, for one.)
- IDEA must then also find, hire and train qualified individuals. In some cases, our staff must travel. Equipment will be shipped; rental agreements signed; internet connections established.
- In larger communities, an IDEA office may be closed for weeks to accommodate regular ed. and special ed. testing needs. Some regions cannot accommodate the hundreds of students during the testing window, and need to rent large, often expensive venues. Additional proctors will be hired and trained. Internet connections will be established, and equipment will be set up and torn down on a daily basis for days or weeks.





# Facilities – throughout Alaska

## IN EACH OF OUR FACILITIES AROUND THE STATE, WE PROVIDE:

- Certified contact teachers and private meeting spaces
  - Libraries, curriculum resource rooms and Resource Room Coordinators
  - Public spaces for clubs, activities and educational community events
  - Tech departments and tech support
  - Field Representatives to support enrollment, advocacy and event planning
  - Classified staff (receptionists, coaches and/or administrative) to support general needs
- Certified special education teachers, and special education services: Consultation on interventions and tools; evaluations by school psychologists; speech and/or language pathologists; occupational therapies; arrangements for physical therapies and counseling
  - Parent Advisory Committees
  - Site Administrators
  - More...





# Expected Unfunded Obligations

## MANDATED MAP GROWTH TESTING:

- While the regulation is still in a proposal stage, it has been openly advertised that districts should expect MAP Growth to be required: Students grades 3-9 will test a total of three times per year. (Third grade students may test six times per year.\*)
- Each of the financial challenges listed under Testing Expenses may be tripled.

## \*AK READS ACT:

- The regulations are also still being considered, but DEED's expectations are that a literacy (testing) screener will be used up to three times per year with all Kindergarten through grade 3 students.
- Literacy progress monitoring may be required between staff and parents a total of 10 times/yr.
- An extensive multi-tiered system of support will be needed, including individualize reading improvement plans, specialized curriculum, interventions, and tools.
- All certified staff serving K-3 students will require additional training in the Science of Reading. (All IDEA certified staff.)





## *Our promise to Alaska...*

*IDEA would like to reiterate our desire to serve families, to do right by our students, to individualize for their needs.*

*We want to support and encourage literacy, just as the AK Reads Act intends. We want to offer parents tools like MAP Growth and other testing so they may more fully understand their students' needs. We want to meet the needs of our special education students, just as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires.*

*We take pride in doing so, in our service, in honoring parent choice, and in our core values to go above and beyond what is required!*

*We are proud of our students and their successes!*

### **2022-2023 IDEA State Champions!**

*Pentathlon*

*Lightbotics (Robotics)*

*Gadget Girls (Robotics)*

*Battle of the Books – grs.  
5/6*

### **2022-2023 IDEA State 2<sup>nd</sup> Place!**

*Academic Decathlon*

*Battle of the Books – high  
school*

*Battle of the Books – grs.  
3/4*

*Hungry Robots (Robotics)*

## And a Call to Action



***We plead for financial relief to be able to support these important responsibilities.***

- *All schools are struggling financially to meet the needs of students while still being able to retain staff with reasonable workloads and competitive wages.*
- *Correspondence schools have the additional burden of doing so without the entirety of what the law normally calls ‘the minimum’ or Base Student Allocation—and without special education funding from the State.*
- *We do not ask for all multipliers available to brick and mortar schools—but rather, only the full BSA and the special education funding for the services and obligations required of us.*

