

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 14, 2025

8:04 a.m.

DRAFT

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Rebecca Himschoot, Co-Chair
Representative Andi Story, Co-Chair
Representative Maxine Dibert
Representative Ted Eischeid
Representative Rebecca Schwanke
Representative Bill Elam

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Jubilee Underwood

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S) : ALASKA'S WORKFORCE FUTURE

- HEARD

PRESENTATION(S) : ALASKA COUNCIL OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
OVERVIEW

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

EMILY FERRY, Family Engagement Manager
Alaska Association of Schoolboards
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave a presentation titled "Alaska's
Workforce Future."

LON GARRISON, Executive Director
Association of Alaska schoolboards
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave a presentation titled "Alaska Association of School Boards Overview."

DR. LISA PARODY, Executive Director
Alaska Council of School Administrators
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-Offered a presentation titled "Alaska Council of School Administrators Overview."

KELLY MANNING, Deputy Director
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-Offered a presentation titled "Alaska Council of School Administrators Overview."

JENNIFER SCHMITZ, Director
Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-Offered a presentation titled "Alaska Council of School Administrators Overview."

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:04:42 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Representatives Eischeid, Elam, Dibert, Schwanke, Story, and Himschoot were present at the call to order.

PRESENTATION(S): Alaska's Workforce Future

[8:05:50 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the first order of business would be a presentation titled "Alaska's Workforce Future."

[8:07:30 AM](#)

EMILY FERRY, Family Engagement Manager, Alaska Association of Schoolboards, gave a presentation titled "Alaska's Workforce Future." She began the presentation on slide 3, which listed six strategies for success in Alaska's workforce future and continued through slides 4 and 5, which highlighted the importance of and role of career guides in Alaska. She moved to slide 6, which outlined the lowering postsecondary education

enrollment in Alaska and continued to slide 7, which displayed a map of the United States that emphasized Alaska's lower performance in postsecondary enrollment as a state. She moved through slides 8 and 9, which highlighted a possible solution to the lowering rates of postsecondary enrollment in Alaska and continued to slide 10, which detailed the Alaska Career Guide Pilot Project.

8:16:02 AM

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Ferry to further detail the information displayed on slide 10 and asked how subsistence use fits into work 16-24 year-old labor statistics.

MS. FERRY explained that the Alaska Career Guide Pilot Project is lead by trained career guides who work to coach their students into achieving a fulfilling and successful career. She explained that the career guide pilot program recognizes and prioritize the importance that subsistence plays in its student's lives.

8:21:56 AM

REPRESENTATIVE EISCHEID asked what factors contribute to the data displayed on slide 7.

MS. FERRY replied that the data on slide 7 might reflect demographic diversity in Alaska's indigenous population and explained that there is a high degree of correlation between unemployment and risky or suicidal behavior. She shared a story of a friend of hers whose life and depression were improved by having a clear vision of a fulfilling career.

8:24:43 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SCHWANKE asked if the graph displayed on slide 6 was measuring postsecondary enrollment specifically and asked the AASB to investigate the correlation between the price of tuition and the declining enrollment rates in college. She emphasized that there might be many factors that contribute to a young person choosing not to attend college.

MS. FERRY answered that the Alaska Association of Schoolboards (AASB) specifically used data from postsecondary institutions because career and technical schools do not consistently submit enrollment or completion data to national career guide databases.

[8:27:43 AM](#)

MS. FERRY resumed the presentation on slide 11, which highlighted the oftentimes non-traditional career or life routes of young people and continued to slide 12, which highlighted a letter of a parent from the Juneau-Douglas High School (JDHS). She moved to slide 13, which highlighted Danielle Carlson's quote about Indigenous students in the University of Alaska (UA) system and continued to slide 14, which emphasized the UA's low cost of attendance as it is compared to other states. She moved through slides 15 and 16, which reiterated slides 3 and 6. She concluded the presentation on slides 17 and 18, which highlighted the opportunities that are available to Alaska's young people.

[8:35:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EISCHEID shared his experience working as an 8th and 9th grade science teacher and commented that education is an "ecosystem".

[8:36:47 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY asked if the Alaska State Legislature was in its second year of a partnership with the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) to place career guides around the state.

MS. FERRY confirmed that the Alaska State Legislature was in a partnership with the DLWD.

[8:38:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ELAM asked if there was more that the Alaska State Legislature could do to entice young people to their prospective career.

MS. FERRY pointed to the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)'s 10:1 student-faculty ratio that has had an outsized impact on the positive outcomes of its students. She said that real-life exposure to career and technical programs could be a big help in exciting a young person to follow through with a career guide and emphasized the importance of giving kids opportunities to experience "bite-sized" pieces of different careers.

**PRESENTATION(S) : Alaska Council of School Administrators
Overview**

[8:43:04 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the first order of business would be a presentation titled "Alaska Association of School Boards Overview."

[8:43:22 AM](#)

LON GARRISON, Executive Director, Association of Alaska schoolboards, gave a presentation titled "Alaska Association of School Boards Overview.". He began the presentation on slide 2, which displayed a map of all of the AASB member school districts in Alaska and moved to slide 3, which gave a brief background of the AASB. He continued to slide 4, which highlighted the 20 staff members that make up the AASB and moved to slide 5, which detailed the governance rules of the AASB. He continued to slide 6, which displayed a graph that highlighted three conditions to be met to attain educational success and moved to slide 7, which listed various state and private entities that contribute to a partnership for school improvement and student achievement. He continued to slide 8, which emphasized the AASB's focus on governance and moved to slide 9, which listed some of the board aligned services that the AASB offers to school districts. He continued to slide 10-11, which highlighted a series of board development opportunities within the AASB and moved to slides 12-13, which described key conditions for learning that the AASB works to meet. He continued to slide 14, which listed a series of aligned resources and services that the AASB offers to school districts.

[8:56:22 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY asked Mr. Garrison to further detail the school climate and connectedness survey as it was mentioned on slide 14.

MR. GARRISON answered that the school climate and connectedness survey is administered to elementary, middle, and high school students, parents, and staff. He said that the data from the survey "facilitates the opportunity to drive discussions and programs that promote growth."

[8:59:47 AM](#)

MR. GARRISON resumed the presentation on slide 15, which further listed a series of aligned resources and services that the AASB offers to school districts and moved to slide 16, which described the AASB's "associated support" that it offers to school districts. He continued to slide 17, which gave three examples of conditions for learning programs and concluded the presentation on slide 18.

[9:01:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EISCHEID asked why the Matanuska-Susitna School Board left the AASB.

MR. GARRISON explained that the Matanuska-Susitna School Board left the AASB because of a "difference in perspective."

**PRESENTATION(S): Alaska Council of School Administrators
Overview**

[9:03:53 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the next order of business would be a presentation titled "Alaska Council of School Administrators Overview."

[9:04:47 AM](#)

DR. LISA PARODY, Executive Director, Alaska Council of School Administrators, Co-offered a presentation titled "Alaska Council of School Administrators Overview." She gave a broad overview of the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) and began the presentation on slide 2, which displayed a map of all of the school districts in Alaska. She moved through slides 3-6, and continued to slide 7, which displayed a graph that compared teacher salaries in Alaska to the U.S. national average.

[9:18:44 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY asked Dr. Parody if she had any idea of how many school administrators were working with special education students.

DR. PARODY said that she would follow-up with more information later.

[9:19:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DIBERT asked if a defined-benefit retirement system could help with the recruitment and retention of teachers in Alaska.

DR. PARODY answered that the lack of a defined-benefit retirement system in Alaska is having an impact on school district's ability to hire and retain quality educators.

[9:21:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked why a teacher might transition to an administrative position within their school district.

DR. PARODY replied that offering paths for advancement internally was found to be an effective tool to grow school administrative leadership in Alaska. She emphasized the necessity of offering internal advancement paths, given the need for quality professionals across all sectors of Alaska's economy.

[9:28:37 AM](#)

KELLY MANNING, Deputy Director, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development, Co-offered a presentation titled "Alaska Council of School Administrators Overview." She picked up the presentation on slide 9, which highlighted national teacher "supply and demand" statistics and moved to slide 10, which emphasized the high rates of educator turnover in Alaska.

[9:30:56 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked if the educator turnover in Alaska was inevitable to be consistently over 20 percent.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MANNING explained that the acute nature of educator turnover nationally has placed a more extreme burden on Alaska.

[9:33:24 AM](#)

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MANNING resumed the presentation on slide 12, which highlighted the increasing number of first day-of-school certified teacher vacancy rates.

[9:35:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EISCHEID asked how higher rates of certified teacher vacancy rates affect student achievement.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MANNING answered that the ultimate goal of teacher retention is to obtain a higher level of student achievement.

[9:37:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCHWANKE asked if the teacher turnover metric is affected by a teacher changing jobs within a school district.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MANNING said that a teacher moving within a school district would not be considered turnover.

[9:38:15 AM](#)

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MANNING resumed the presentation on slide 13, which detailed the establishment of the Teacher Retention and Recruitment (TRR) plan and moved to slides 14-15, which displayed a chart that listed a series of potential solutions proposed by the TRR plan.

[9:41:55 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked how the recommendations of slide 15 could be fit into a suite of legislative solutions.

DR. PARODY replied that the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ASCA) is currently working on an omnibus bill that would address the recommendations put forward on slide 15.

[9:44:53 AM](#)

JENNIFER SCHMITZ, Director, Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center, Co-offered a presentation titled "Alaska Council of School Administrators Overview." She picked up the presentation on slides 17-19, which detailed 8 reasons that educators in Alaska are leaving and what the Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center (AERRC) is doing to address it. She moved to slide 20, which detailed the three branches of the Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center (AERRC). She continued to slide 21, which highlighted a series of events that the AERRC has hosted and moved to slide 22, which displayed a graphic that highlighted the TRR "playbook implementation."

[9:52:36 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked which entity is directing an exit study for teachers leaving Alaska.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MANNING answered that the exit survey was being completed by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER).

[9:54:06 AM](#)

MS. SCHMITZ resumed the presentation on slide 25, which highlighted statistics of the AERRC's virtual job fair and moved through slides 26-27, which described the AERRC's work in international TRR. She touched on slide 29 and concluded the presentation on slide 30.

[9:57:15 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT thanked the invited testifiers and delivered committee announcements.

[9:58:09 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:58 a.m.