

ED.

WEEK:

REPORT

CARD

FOR AK.

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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February 17, 1998

The Honorable Gary Wilken, Chair  
Senate HES Committee  
State Capitol, Room 510  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

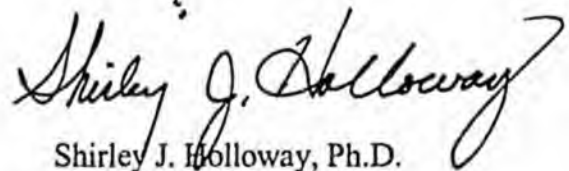
The Honorable Con Bunde, Chair  
House HES Committee  
State Capitol, Room 104  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Wilken and Representative Bunde:

At your request, the Department of Education submits the following briefing on *Education Week's* Quality Counts report. This briefing is a technical analysis of the grades *Education Week* gave Alaska regarding our educational system. Additionally, I have provided a letter from Jay Chambers, the developer of the cost index used in *Education Week's* analysis, regarding the report's equity test.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our analysis of this report. I hope it leads to an informed discussion on education in Alaska.

Sincerely,



Shirley J. Holloway, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

cc: Senate and House HES Committee Members

Senator Mike Miller

Representative Gail Phillips

State Board of Education

TO: Shirley Holloway, Commissioner of Education

FROM: Bill McDiarmid, Director, Institute of Social and Economic Research

RE: The validity of *Quality Counts*' evaluations of public education in Alaska

I believe I mentioned most of the issues below to Gretchen Gass on the telephone. Perhaps what is most disturbing about these data is not that some of the indicators are inappropriate or misleading, which they are; rather, it is the precipitous decline in resources documented here, however crudely. At a time when 44 other states are increasing support of public schools, Alaska leads the nation in the ignominious category of defunding schools. Even states such as New Mexico, in which a quarter of families are below the poverty line, have increased educational spending by 33% between 1986 and 1996.

Many of the areas in which the State is not measuring up can only be redressed by an infusion of resources. For instance, the lack of resources for professional development is distressing - and accounts in large part for Alaska's poor showing in the "Teacher Quality" category. Kentucky, a far poorer state than Alaska, distributes \$24 per pupil to each district for professional development - \$16 of which is controlled directly by teachers through a professional development committee.

At the same time, the quality of the data on which these evaluations are based strike me as crude and, at times, downright misleading. I would examine them very thoroughly before using them as the basis for any policy decisions. Here are a few specific points that occurred to me as I studied the data and the sources for the data:

1. **What is the appropriate comparison group for Alaska?** In the *Quality Counts* (QC) data, Alaska is compared against the other 49 states. How appropriate is it to compare Alaska's situation and performance to states such as California, New York, Florida, Wisconsin, or Connecticut? How many of these states must serve schools at such great distances? How many face comparable costs to deliver services?

A more appropriate group may be the large, sparsely populated Western states - Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. When compared to these states, Alaska spending on education for every \$1000 of state wealth is less than Montana's, greater than Idaho's and Wyoming's. As for the dollar gap between districts at the 5th and 95th percentile in spending, again Alaska shows a much narrower gap than does Montana (\$6,701 to \$10,858) although wider than Idaho's or Wyoming's. As for student achievement, only Montana had greater proportions of 4th and 8th graders achieve at the proficiency level on the 1996 NAEP mathematics than Alaska.

2. **The indicators are pretty crude - and few states show up well:** On the "Teacher Quality" set of indicators, only one state received an "A" and six others received a grade of "B." Forty three states received a grade of "C" or lower, including 15 states that received "Ds," Alaska among them. As for "School Climate," no state received an "A." Alaska actually ranked among the top 16 states, despite a grade of "C-." On the allocation of educational resources to instruction, 44 states received grades of "C" or lower while on the equity of such allocations, 39 received a "C" or lower.

In other words, states are being held to very high standards on many of the indicators, standards that largely ignore the demographic, geographic, political, social, and economic realities that many states face. In a number of states, Alaska among them, investment in public education is insufficient for these states to make significant progress.

3. **When looked at together, some of the categories don't make sense.** When we look at the student achievement category, Alaska, based on results from the 1996 NAEP, fares pretty well: Our 8th graders ranked 9th in the percentage who achieved at the proficiency level in mathematics and 16th in the proportion who achieved proficiency level in science. Yet, the state received an overall grade of "D+" on "Standards and Assessment." This should raise questions about the relationship between these indicators of "standards and assessment," on the one hand, and student achievement, on the other. Apparently, some Alaskan educators are doing well by their students but this doesn't seem to be reflected in some of the other

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Shirley Holloway		From	Bill McDiarmid		
Director of Education		Co.	1005		
Phone #					
Fax #					

indicators. No one at *Education Week* seems to have stepped back from the data, looked across a state's performance in the various categories, and asked, "Now, does this make sense? Does it make sense to say that students are doing well but that teacher quality is low?"

4. **How appropriate to the circumstances in Alaska are items designed for a national population of schools and educators?** A number of indicators in QC rely on national databases from surveys such as the Schools and Staffing Survey conducted at intervals by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). Items on such surveys are designed for conditions and situations that are typical in the Lower 48. Moreover, NCES derives what they term a "cost of education" index from such data, the index that is the basis of for several categories in the "Resources" section. But we know little about how accurately this index accounts for the cost of delivering education in Alaska, particularly in remote areas. Does such an index take into account the cost of flying a Special Education teacher to several schools each week to ensure that mandated services are delivered to a target population of students? Without more information on how such critical data was obtained and how such "indices" are constructed, these various indicators constitute a shaky basis for making judgments about Alaskan schools and teachers.

5. **Some indicators are derived from the judgments of other organizations that have their own agendas.** *Education Week*, in assembling QC, relied on a number of other organizations for data and, in some cases, "evaluations." The most egregious example of relying on the evaluation of another organization is the wholesale adoption of the judgments of the Center for Education Reform on the "strength" of various states' charter school regulation. The Center is pushing its own vision of charter schools. States that limited the number of chartering authorities, the number of charter schools that could be started, and charter schools' exemption from state school regulations and collective bargaining agreements do not meet the Center's ideal for charter school legislation and, consequently, fair poorly. Even so - and you would not know this from QC - Alaska fell just 4.3 points shy of "stronger" law status on the Center's 50-point scale. The real issue is how well charter legislation serves Alaskan students, their families, and the common weal - not how well they measure up in the eyes of charter school proponents.

6. **To raise "Teacher Quality" results, would require an investment of resources.** A number of indicators on which Alaska does not show up well are directions in which the state might consider moving were resources available. Classroom-based assessments of new teacher performance is, for instance, a promising practice. Yet, to mount such assessments in the state would require resources -- for travel, training, and personnel - that are not available. Similarly, first-year induction programs are promising but to be done right require considerable resources - again for travel, training, and personnel.

However, undertaking any of these practices in isolation is unlikely to produce significant improvements. What we have learned is that piecemeal approaches to improving teacher quality are window-dressing. What is required is a systemic approach. This would involve examining the entire system of teacher development - from preservice through inservice - and bringing the various parts of the system into alignment. Without a substantial increase in resources, such an effort seems unlikely. Yet without such an effort, Alaska will continue to rank poorly on this dimension of quality.



# UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE

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February 17, 1998

TO: Senator Gary Wilton, Chair, Senate HESS Committee  
Representative Con Bunde, Chair, House HESS Committee

FROM: Bill McDiarmid, Director, Institute of Social and Economic Research

RE: The validity of *Quality Counts*' evaluations of public education in Alaska

Commissioner Shirley Holloway asked me to review *Education Week*'s evaluation of Alaskan education that appeared in the publication, *Quality Counts* (January 8, 1998). Perhaps what is most disturbing about these data is not that some of the indicators are inappropriate or misleading, which they often are; rather, it is the precipitous decline in resources documented here, however crudely. At a time when 44 other states are increasing support of public schools, Alaska leads the nation in the ignominious category of defunding schools. Even states such as New Mexico, in which a quarter of families are below the poverty line, have increased educational spending by 33% between 1986 and 1996.

Many of the areas in which the State is not measuring up can only be redressed by an infusion of resources. For instance, the lack of resources for professional development is distressing — and accounts in large part for Alaska's poor showing in the "Teacher Quality" category. Kentucky, a far poorer state than Alaska, distributes \$24 per pupil to each district for professional development — \$16 of which is controlled directly by teachers through a professional development committee.

At the same time, the quality of the data on which these evaluations are based strike me as crude and, at times, downright misleading. I would examine them very thoroughly before using them as the basis for any policy decisions. I would feel far more comfortable with data collected and analyzed in Alaska using instruments and approaches that take into account the unique circumstances that Alaskan schools and educators face. Here are a few specific points that occurred to me as I studied the data and the sources for the data:

1. What is the appropriate comparison group for Alaska? In the *Quality Counts* (QC) data, Alaska is compared against the other 49 states. How appropriate is it to compare Alaska's situation and performance to states such as California, New York, Florida, Wisconsin, or Connecticut? How many of these states must serve schools at such great distances? How many face comparable costs to deliver services? How many face the challenges posed by schools in extremely remote locations?

A more appropriate group may be the large, sparsely populated Western states -- Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. When compared to these states, Alaskan's spending on education for every \$1000 of state wealth is less than Montana's, greater than Idaho's and Wyoming's. As for the dollar gap between districts at the 5th and 95th percentile in spending, again Alaska shows a much narrower gap than does Montana (\$6,701 to \$10,858) although wider than Idaho's or Wyoming's. As for student achievement, only Montana had greater proportions of 4th and 8th graders achieve at the proficiency level on the 1996 NAEP mathematics than Alaska.

2. The indicators are pretty crude — and few states show up well: On the "Teacher Quality" set of indicators, only one state received an "A" and six others received a grade of "B." Forty-three

states received a grade of "C" or lower, including 15 states that received "Ds." Alaska among them. As for "School Climate," no state received an "A." Alaska actually ranked among the top 16 states, despite a grade of "C-." On the allocation of educational resources to instruction, 44 states received grades of "C" or lower while on the equity of such allocations, 39 received a "C" or lower.

In other words, states are being held to standards that may be, for some, unrealistic, standards that largely ignore the demographic, geographic, political, social, and economic realities that many states face. In a number of states, Alaska among them, investment in public education is insufficient for these states to make significant progress on several key indicators. If we continue to defund schools, we are destined to remain at or near the bottom of many categories.

3. When looked at together, some of the categories don't make sense. When we look at the student achievement category, Alaska, based on results from the 1996 NAEP, fares pretty well: Our 8th graders ranked 9th in the percentage who achieved at the proficiency level in mathematics and 16th in the proportion who achieved proficiency level in science. Yet, the state received overall grades of "D1" on "Standards and Assessment" and "Teacher Quality." This should raise questions about the relationship between the measures of "standards and assessment" and "teacher quality," on the one hand, and student achievement, on the other. Apparently, some Alaskan educators are doing well by their students but this doesn't seem to be reflected in some of the other indicators. No one at *Education Week* seems to have stepped back from the data, looked across a state's performance in the various categories, and asked, "Now, does this make sense? Does it make sense to say that students are doing well but then to claim that 'teacher quality' is low? Are our measures of 'teacher quality' valid?"

4. How appropriate to the circumstances in Alaska are items designed for a national population of schools and educators? A number of indicators in QC rely on national databases from surveys such as the Schools and Staffing Survey conducted at intervals by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). Items on such surveys are designed for conditions and situations that are typical in the Lower 48. Moreover, NCES derives what they term a "cost of education" index from such data, the index that is the basis of for several categories in the "Resources" section. But we know little about how accurately this index accounts for the cost of delivering education in Alaska, particularly in remote areas. Does such an index take into account the cost of flying a Special Education teacher to several schools each week to ensure that mandated services are delivered to a target population of students? Without more information on how such critical data were obtained and how such "indices" are constructed, these various indicators constitute a shaky basis for making judgments about Alaskan schools and teachers.

5. Some indicators are derived from the judgments of other organizations that have their own agendas. *Education Week*, in assembling QC, relied on a number of other organizations for data and, in some cases, evaluations. The most egregious example of relying on the evaluation of another organization is the wholesale adoption of the judgments of the Center for Education Reform on the "strength" of various states' charter school regulation. The Center is pushing its own vision of charter schools. States that limited the number of chartering authorities, the number of charter schools that could be started, and charter schools' exemption from state school regulations and collective bargaining agreements do not meet the Center's ideal for charter school legislation and, consequently, fair poorly. Even so — and you would not know this from QC — Alaska fell just 4.3 points shy of "stronger" law status on the Center's 50-point scale. Isn't the real issue how well charter legislation serves Alaskan students, their families, and the common weal — not how well they measure up in the eyes of charter school proponents?

6. To raise "Teacher Quality" results, would require an investment of resources. A number of indicators on which Alaska does not show up well are directions in which the state might consider moving were resources available. Classroom-based assessments of new teacher performance is, for instance, a promising practice. Yet, to mount such assessments in the state would require

resources -- for travel, training, and personnel — that are not available. Similarly, first-year induction programs are promising but to be done right require considerable resources — again, for travel, training, and personnel.

However, undertaking any of these practices in isolation is unlikely to produce significant improvements. What we have learned from the history of school reform is that piecemeal approaches to improving teacher quality are window-dressing. What is required is a systemic approach. This would involve examining the entire system of teacher development — from preservice through inservice — and bringing the various parts of the system into alignment. With modest support from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and matching state money, at least a dozen states have undertaken to do just this. Without a substantial increase in resources in Alaska, such an effort seems unlikely. Yet without such an effort, Alaska will continue to rank poorly on this dimension of quality.

In sum, I urge you and your colleagues to approach the judgments and evaluations offered in *Quality Counts* with extreme caution. We need to collect and analyze our own data on the condition of our educational system. At the same time, the report does focus attention on the lack of resources available to state and local policy makers and educators who would like to bring greater alignment to the system as a whole.



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# State Indicators

BY CRAIG D. JERALD, BRIDGET K. CURRAN  
& LYNN OLSON

*Quality Counts* is based on the assumption that, in education, some things matter more than others. In particular, we have focused on efforts in the states to:

- Raise student achievement;
- Set standards for what their students should know and be able to do;
- Prepare teachers who can teach to those standards;
- Create schools and classrooms that are conducive to learning; and
- Distribute money for schools equitably and adequately, and use it wisely.

Our state indicators are divided into five sections, one for achievement, and four additional categories that are important for a high-quality education system: standards and assessments, quality of teaching, school climate, and resources.

This year, as last, states earned a solid C for their efforts. But they are pushing ahead. Many states are now working to align their standards with their assessments, strengthen their accountability systems, introduce more options for K-12 students, and improve the preparation and licensure of new teachers.

We've also taken a number of steps to improve the indicators in *Quality Counts*.

The most important change is the addition of the first attempt to grade states on the rigor of their standards in English and mathematics, an analysis conducted for *Quality Counts* by the Council for Basic Education, a Washington-based nonprofit group that works to promote a curriculum strong in the basic subjects for all children. Next year, *Quality Counts* will also grade state standards in science and social studies.

Although states have expended a lot of time and energy setting standards for what students should know and be able to do, those standards will do little to enhance student achievement unless they are rigorous.

See our tables on students' NAEP scores, including 4th grade math, 1996, 8th grade math, 1996, 8th grade science, 1996, and additional achievement data, such as number of students in AP courses.

**Achievement.** All students achieving at high levels and engaged in high-level academic work. *Quality Counts '98* includes new data on how students in participating states performed on the 1996 mathematics and science exams of the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Seven states—Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia—made significant gains in the percentage of 4th graders who scored at the "proficient" level or above on the 1996 math test, compared with 1992. Texas, with a whopping 10-point gain, landed among the top five states.

Many of the states that improved the most on the national assessment also earned high grades on our measures of educational quality, such as North Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia.

In addition, states made important strides in increasing the percentage of their 8th graders who take algebra, which jumped from about 19 percent in 1992—the last time NAEP collected such information—to 25 percent in 1996.

Finally, we have included a new column on the annual dropout rate in grades 9-12 for the 29 states that now report such data using a common definition developed by the National Center for Education Statistics.

How we graded the states: We graded states in four categories: standards and assessments, teaching, school climate, and resources. States are ranked on each table according to the overall grade each received in that category. In the case of ties, states are ranked alphabetically.

To arrive at the grades in each category, we grouped the indicators by topic. And we allowed each topic to count for a certain percentage of the grade. The columns within a given topic were usually given equal weight. Exceptions are noted in the sources and notes for each table.

For achievement, we ranked states according to the percentage of their students who reached the "proficient" level in math and science on the 1996 NAEP.

**Standards and Assessments.** High standards for all children and assessments aligned with those standards.

This continued to be an incredibly active area for state policymaking. Seven more states completed the process of adopting standards in the core subjects in 1997, bringing the total to 38. Iowa is now the only state that is not working on statewide academic standards.

See our tables on high standards and assessments. They measure states' standards, assessments, and accountability.

Moving beyond the question of whether a state has adopted standards, *Quality Counts* for the first time this year evaluates whether those standards in English and mathematics are rigorous, clear, and specific enough to form a core curriculum.

The Council for Basic Education devised the ratings for rigor especially for *Quality Counts*.

The CBE looked at whether the expectations for student learning are high by benchmarking each state's math and English standards against the best documents available at the national and state levels.

In math, the CBE looked at the standards set by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and selected states, and then compared those with the standards in each state to see whether they required students to master the same content and skills.

In English/language arts, the CBE compared standards with those developed by the New Standards project and selected states. The CBE reviewed only state documents that had been adopted by state boards of education or were expected to gain approval by January 1998.

The judgments on clarity and specificity were provided by the American Federation of Teachers. To judge whether standards were clear and specific enough to form the basis for a common core curriculum for all students, the national teachers' union looked at whether the standards documents were detailed, comprehensive, and firmly rooted in the content of the subject area.

To obtain better and more recent data than have been available until now, *Quality Counts* also surveyed the assessment directors in all 50 states to find out how they will measure student performance in 1997-98 and in what subjects their tests are actually aligned with their standards.

Finally, we refined the ratings of state accountability systems. This year, states received credit for having an accountability system only if it was based on indicators of student performance and not just on "process" measures such as how many textbooks are in the school library. Based on this revised definition, a total of 32 states now have accountability systems that provide rewards or sanctions for schools based, in part, on test scores.

See our tables on **teacher quality, including performance-based licensing systems, teacher incentives to seek National Board Certification, professional development efforts, and teacher education.**

**Teaching Quality.** Teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach to higher standards.

If students are to learn at high levels, they need teachers with the knowledge and skills to take them there. This year, Quality Counts focuses on states' efforts to set standards for licensing teachers that are linked to their standards for student achievement. We also looked at

whether states are beginning to license teachers based on their demonstrated knowledge and skills, instead of their completion of education courses. Twenty states now have standards for what new teachers should know and be able to do. Sixteen states are working to create rigorous new tests for teachers through the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. And eight states have developed their own assessments.

This year, we also include the number of teachers in each state who have been certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the best available evaluation of experienced teachers. And we looked at whether states are providing time and money for teachers to participate in professional development once they are licensed.

**School Climate.** Schools organized and operated in a manner most conducive to teaching and learning.

See our tables on **school climate. They measure class size and student engagement, parent involvement and school size, and school autonomy.**

Last year, most of our measures of school climate came from the federal government's Schools and Staffing Survey, which collects data from teachers, principals, and educational administrators nationwide. This is the best source of information on the characteristics of teachers and schools, but the survey is not being conducted again until 1999.

To provide new information, *Quality Counts '98* includes data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which collects information on selected characteristics of schools that participate in the federally sponsored test. Although we still look at such issues as class size and student engagement, the sources of the information are different and the numbers therefore are not comparable with last year's. On the plus side, we've added new data about parent involvement in schools, an important aspect of effective schooling.

This year, *Quality Counts* also grades states based on whether they allow charter schools—publicly financed schools that operate free from most state rules and regulations.

We decided to grade states on this question because research suggests

that parents and students like charter schools and that such schools are spurring changes in public school systems.

We've also added a measure of whether states' charter school laws are strong or weak, developed by the Washington-based Center for Education Reform, a nonprofit organization that promotes increased choices in education. Although four more states enacted charter school laws in 1997, only two of those were rated strong pieces of legislation.

See our tables on resources, including adequacy, allocation and equitable distribution, comparisons of per-pupil expenditure, and additional measures, including condition of buildings.

**Resources.** Are they adequate, distributed equitably, and focused on learning?

All the data on education spending have been updated by at least one year. But the numbers are still not as recent as we would like, given the rapidity with which states are changing their school finance formulas. The time lag stems from the time it takes for the federal government to collect data from more than 15,000 separate school districts and then verify those data and compile them nationally.

The grade for allocation of resources this year is based solely on the percent of education expenditures spent on instruction. Last year, we used two additional measures, one of which has not been updated and the other of which is no longer available.

Last year, *Quality Counts* used a report from the U.S. General Accounting Office to measure the equity of state's educational funding. This year, *Education Week* conducted its own analysis of spending data from more than 14,000 districts. The data come from the U.S. Census Bureau's F-33 Survey of School District Revenue and Spending. Our analysis attempts to factor out acceptable sources of variation in spending between districts by:

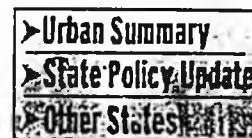
Adjusting each district's spending for regional differences in the cost of educational supplies and services using the National Center for Education Statistics' "cost of education index";  
Giving more weight to poor and special education students, who cost more to educate and often receive supplemental funding; and  
Excluding districts with fewer than 200 students because their small size leads to higher administrative costs per student.

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# REPORT CARD ALASKA



Click on the terms for more information about our indicators; click on grades to see the data behind them.

	1992	1996		1997	1998
<u>Student Achievement</u> (NAEP scores out of 100%)			<u>Standards and Assessments:</u>	C+	D+
Proficient in science, 8th grade:		<u>31%</u>	<u>Quality of Teaching:</u>	C	D+
Proficient in math, 8th grade:	?	<u>30%</u>	<u>School Climate:</u>	C	C-
<b>URBAN CHALLENGE</b>			<u>Resources</u>		
<b>Disadvantaged Schools</b> (NAEP scores out of 100%)			Adequacy:	C+	D-
Below basic in reading, 4th grade:		<u>?</u>	Equity:	D+	F
Below basic in math, 8th grade:		<u>N/S</u>	Allocation:	F	F

**NOTE:** The grades on school climate are not comparable from one year to the next because the data sources have changed.

? indicates the state did not participate in national assessment, survey, or data collection.

N/S indicates no schools in sample were disadvantaged.

**COMMENT:** Alaska has adopted voluntary academic standards, but they are not clear or rigorous. And the state does not have any tests that are aligned with its standards. On the other hand, it is one of the few states in which urban students score as well as or better than nonurban students on national tests. Now, the state is struggling to fix a finance formula that must balance the vastly different needs of its urban and rural populations.

### AN URBAN SNAPSHOT

#### Anchorage

- 42% of state's population
- 39% of state's children
- 32% of state's poor children
- 0% of state's children living in extremely impoverished neighborhoods
- 38% of state's public school students
- 29% of state's free-lunch students
- 32% of state's minority students
- 38% of state's Spring 1994 graduates
- 27% of state's FY 1994 education spending

This report card is part of Quality Counts '98, a special report from Education Week on the Web.

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# Alaska Data

This table shows Alaska's scores in our five major areas.

- Contents
- The Challenges
- The Solutions
- State by State
- Order

- [Student Achievement](#)
- [School Climate](#)
- [Standards & Assessments](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Quality of Teaching](#)



See this state's [urban data table](#) for more education data, broken out by urban and nonurban districts.

## Student Achievement

For more information about these measures, see our 50-state [Student Achievement](#) data table.

? = State did not participate in national assessment, survey, or data collection.  
 + = A statistically significant improvement from 1992.  
 All figures are in percents.

	Alaska
4th graders "proficient" in math, NAEP 1996	21
4th graders "basic" in math, NAEP 1996	44
4th graders below "basic" in math, NAEP 1996	35
8th graders "proficient" in math, NAEP 1996	30
8th graders "basic" in math, NAEP 1996	38
8th graders below "basic" in math, NAEP 1996	32
4th graders who scored at least at "proficient" level on 1996 NAEP science exam	31
8th graders "basic" in science, NAEP 1996	34
8th graders below "basic" in science, NAEP 1996	35
4th graders at least at "proficient" level on NAEP reading test, 1994	?
Public high schools offering Advanced Placement courses, 1997	12
8th graders taking algebra, 1996	27
Students taking upper-level math, 1996	?
Students taking upper-level science, 1996	?
16- to 19-year-olds not in school, not graduated, 1994	7
9th to 12th graders who dropped out, 1994-95	2

H.S. grads in two- or four-year college, 1994

37

## Standards & Assessments

For more information about these measures, see our 50-state [Standards & Assessments](#) data table.

Port = Portfolio assessment

Perf = Performance assessment

CRT = Criterion-referenced test

NRT = Norm-referenced test

Wr = Writing assessment

+ indicates progress toward adopting standards since last year.

\* indicates draft document was reviewed.

\*\* indicates document was not available for review.

\*\*\* indicates evaluation was based on document that state plans to replace with newer standards.

	Alaska
Score	69
Grade	D+
State has adopted standards in core subjects, Dec. 1997	yes
Rigor of math standards, Dec. 1997	D-
Clarity of math standards, July 1996	C
Rigor of English standards, Dec. 1997	D-
Clarity of English standards, July 1996	D
How state measures performance, 1997-98	NRT, Wr
Subjects tested using assessments aligned to standards, 1997-98	none
Mastery of standards linked to graduation/promotion, July 1997	yes
Schools and/or districts held accountable for student performance through public reporting	
Schools and/or districts held accountable for student performance through rewards	
Schools and/or districts held accountable for student performance through sanctions	
Will state participate in next NAEP? (1998)	no

## Quality of Teaching

For more information about these measures, see our 50-state [Quality of Teaching](#) data table.

? = State did not participate in national assessment, survey, or data collection.

	Alaska
Score	67
Grade	D+
State has standards for new teachers, Dec. 1997	yes
State has assessment for new teachers, 1997	no
State requires evaluation of new teachers' classroom performance, 1997	no
State participates in INTASC, 1997	yes
State contributes to INTASC's new teacher assessments, 1997	yes
State requires and funds new teacher induction, 1997	no
State has established independent professional-standards board, 1997	no
State provides incentives for teachers to seek national board certification through license portability, 1997	
State provides incentives for teachers to seek national board certification through license renewal, 1997	
State provides incentives for teachers to seek national board certification through fee supports, 1997	
State provides incentives for teachers to seek national board certification through pay supplement, 1997	
Number of national board-certified teachers, 1997	5
% of secondary teachers who hold degree in subject they teach, 1994	64
% 8th graders whose math teachers had 16 or more hours of professional development in math	31
Provides time for professional development, 1996	no
Provides funds for professional development, 1996	yes
Requires academic major for secondary teacher certification, 1997	no
Requires alignment of teacher education program with K-12 content standards, 1997	no
% new teacher graduates from NCATE-accredited institutions.	

1996	
Required weeks of student teaching, 1997	12

## School Climate

This table shows Alaska's scores in our School Climate category. For more information about these measures, see our 50-state [School Climate](#) data table.

? = State did not participate in national assessment, survey, or data collection, and grade could not be calculated due to lack of data.

n/a = not applicable.

+ = new charter school law.

	Alaska	
Score	70	
Grade	C	
% 4th graders in classes of 25 or fewer, 1996	64	
% of secondary in math classes of 25 or fewer students, 1996	53	
% 8th graders in schools reporting that...	absenteeism is not a problem, 1996	30
	tardiness is not a problem, 1996	30
	classroom misbehavior is not a problem, 1996	64
% 8th graders in schools reporting that...	lack of parent involvement is not a problem, 1996	55
	more than half parents attend open house or back-to-school night, 1996	79
	more than half parents attend parent-teacher conferences, 1996	78
State permits site-based management, Oct. 1997	yes	
Statewide open-enrollment program, Sept. 1997	no	
State law allows charter schools, Sept. 1997	yes	
Strength of charter school legislation, Sept. 1997	Weak	
State grants waivers of education regulations, Oct. 1997	yes	
% high school students in schools of 900 or fewer students, 1996	41	
% elem. students in schools of 350 or fewer students, 1996	18	

## Resources

This table shows Alaska's scores in our Resources categories. For more information about these measures, see our 50-state [Resources](#) data table.

? = State did not participate in national assessment, survey, or data collection.

	Alaska
Adequacy score	60
Adequacy grade	D-
Spending per student, adjusted for regional costs, 1996	\$6,040
% change in inflation-adjusted spending per student, 1986-1996	-25
% total taxable resources spent on education, 1995	4.7
Allocation grade	F
% annual expenditures spent on instruction, 1995	56.3
Equity grade	F
Relative inequity in spending per student among districts, 1994	30.1%
Unadjusted education spending per student, 1996	\$8,238
Education spending for every \$1,000 in state wealth (gross state product), 1995	\$47.41
Dollar gap between districts at 5th and 95th percentiles in spending, 1994	\$6,701
Average teacher salary, adjusted for cost of living, 1996	\$36,422
Teachers as percentage of total staff, 1996	49
Students per multimedia computer, 1997	16
% computer-intensive schools, 1997	81
% schools reporting at least one building in inadequate condition, 1994	45

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EDUCATION WEEK

Quality Counts 1998

Contents

The Challenges

The Solutions

State-by-State

Order

# Urban Data for Alaska

This table shows Alaska's urban and district scores in seven areas:

- [Achievement](#)
- [Student Characteristics](#)
- [Poverty and Achievement](#)
- [School Size, Spending, and Dropout Rates](#)
- [Teaching, Climate, and Class Size](#)
- [Standards and Accountability](#)
- [Child Poverty and Race](#)



See this state's [corresponding data](#) on our five indicators.

All figures in percents. States with significant urban centers are ranked by percent of students at NAEP "basic" level or higher.

## Achievement

"Urban" refers to a school district in which 75% or more of the households served are within the central city of a metropolitan area.

- ? = state did not participate in national assessment
- n/d = no district in sample met the "urban" definition
- \* = interpret with caution due to small sample size

	Alaska
Reading: 4th graders, 1994, in urban districts	?
... in nonurban districts	?
Mathematics: 8th graders, 1996, in urban districts	70
... in nonurban districts	66
Science: 8th graders, 1996, in urban districts	67
... in nonurban districts	63

## Poverty and Achievement

"Urban" refers to a school district in which 75% or more of the households served are within the central city of a metropolitan area. "High-poverty" refers to a school where more than half the students are poor enough to qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

"Algebra class" refers to an algebra or integrated-mathematics course.

- ? = state did not participate in national assessment.
- n/d = no district in sample met the "urban" definition.
- n/s = no school in sample met the "high-poverty" definition.
- \* Interpret with caution due to small sample size.

	Alaska
<b>Reading: 4th graders, 1994, in urban districts: High-poverty schools</b>	?
... in urban districts: All other schools	?
... in nonurban districts: High-poverty schools	?
... in nonurban districts: All other schools	?
<b>Mathematics: 8th graders, 1996, in urban districts: High-poverty schools</b>	n/s
... in urban districts: All other schools	79
... in nonurban districts: High-poverty schools	36*
... in nonurban districts: All other schools	72
<b>Science: 8th graders, 1996, in urban districts: High-poverty schools</b>	n/s
... in urban districts: All other schools	68
... in nonurban districts: High-poverty schools	21
... in nonurban districts: All other schools	70
<b>Algebra: 8th graders in urban districts: Taking an algebra class</b>	25
.. and scoring at least "basic"	98
<b>Algebra: 8th graders in nonurban districts: Taking an algebra class</b>	29
.. and scoring at least "basic"	88

## Teaching, Climate, and Class Size

"Urban" refers to a school district in which 75% or more of the households served are within the central city of a metropolitan area.

n/d = no district in sample met the "urban" definition.

\* Interpret with caution due to small sample size.

	Alaska
<b>Teacher Qualifications: Teachers with no license, or only an emergency or temporary license, urban districts</b>	1
... in nonurban districts	3
... Secondary classes taught by teachers without at least a college minor in their subjects, urban districts	26
... in nonurban districts	31
<b>Class Size: Elementary teachers with class sizes of fewer than 25 students, urban districts</b>	56
... in nonurban districts	73
... Secondary teachers with fewer than 30 students per day, urban districts	8
... in nonurban districts	32
<b>Climate: Teachers who report that physical conflicts among students are a serious or moderate problem, urban districts</b>	48
... in nonurban districts	28
... Teachers who report that student weapons possession is a serious or moderate problem, urban districts	22
... in nonurban districts	4
... Principals who report a great deal of control over hiring, urban districts	91
... in nonurban districts	77

## Child Poverty and Race

All figures in percents. States with significant urban centers are ranked by percent of students at NAEP "basic" level or higher.

more information about these measures, see our 50-state [Child Poverty and Race](#) data table.

Because the 1990 U.S. Census considered "Hispanic" to be an ethnic rather than racial category, black children may also be Hispanic, and vice versa. An "extremely impoverished neighborhood" refers to a census tract in which at least 40% of the residents are poor.

n/a = not applicable.

\* In addition to city data, these tables provide a separate listing of county-level data because these cities are part of countywide districts.

City	Anchorage
State	AK
Children who are poor: in the city	9
... in the state	11
Children who are black in the city	8
... in the state	4
Children who are Hispanic in the city	5
... in the state	4
Children living in poor neighborhoods in the city	0
... in the state	1
... city's share of state	0
... state's share of nation	0.04
... who are Black	n/a
... who are Hispanic	n/a

## Student Characteristics

\* Free lunch\* does not include reduced-price lunch.

n/a = data not available

City	Anchorage
State	AK
Students poor enough to be eligible for free lunch (1995): in the district	14
... in the state	19
Minority students (1995): in the district	30
... in the state	35
Special education students (individual education plan) (1995): in the district	14.2
... in the state	13.8

## School Size, Spending, and Dropout Rates

n/a = not available

\* = weighted average

City	Anchorage
State	AK
School Size: % high school students in schools enrolling 900 or fewer students (1995): in the district	9
... in the state	50
Spending: 1993-94 expenditure per student, adjusted for regional costs and special student needs: in the district	\$3,761
... in the state	\$4,850
Dropout Rates: % students in grades 9-12 who dropped out of school in 1993-94: District	n/a
... in the state	n/a
% change in the district's class of 1994 enrollment from freshman year to spring 1994 graduation	-21
% change in the district's total high school enrollment during the same period	11

## Standards and Accountability

Parentheses indicate that the district does not have the program or policy but the state does.

\* = both the district and the state have the policy or program.

\*\* = the district has teacher evaluation program, but evaluation is not based on student performance.

NR No response

n/a Not applicable

Not yet District is in process of developing policy

W Examples of student work

Gr Grades

Pr Projects, exhibitions, or demonstrations

Inf Publishes report on performance

Imp Takes steps to improve low-performing schools

Cat Identifies schools by performance categories

Rew Recognizes or rewards high-performing schools

City	Anchorage
State	AK
Has the district adopted academic standards?	Not Yet
District requires students to master standards to graduate	N/A
How does district measure whether students have mastered standards?	N/A
Does district hold itself accountable for student performance?	Inf
Does district hold its schools accountable for student performance?	Inf, Imp"
Does district hold its teachers accountable for student performance?	Yes**

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Analysis of  
*Education Week's* Quality Counts Report

February 18, 1998

Department of Education

# Overview

## ◆ Who graded us?

- ❖ *Education Week*, a weekly newspaper covering K-12 federal and state education topics. *Education Week* contracted out some of the analysis.

## ◆ What is *Education Week's* purpose of this report?

*"To provide an annual evaluation of the condition of education and the progress of education reform in the 50 states."*

*-Craig Jerald, Education Week*

## ◆ How does this report differ from last year's *Education Week* report?

*"This second report sought to improve indicators for assessing the quality of state education systems by adding external reviews, gathering better data, and incorporating higher evaluation standards."*

*-Craig Jerald, Education Week*

# Overview

## ◆ What was graded?

- ❖ Grades were not based on student performance
- ❖ Grades were based on four areas
  - ◆ Student Standards and Assessments
  - ◆ Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards
  - ◆ Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning
  - ◆ Financial Resources for Education

## ◆ What information was evaluated?

- ❖ The information evaluated came from the AKDOE, national sources, and reports from non-governmental agencies.

## ◆ Was *Education Week* accurate?

- ❖ Yes and No. This presentation will lay forth where we believe *Education Week* was accurate and where we disagree with their analysis.

## Four Areas of Analysis

- Student Standards and Assessments**
- Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards
- Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning
- Financial Resources for Education

# Student Standards and Assessment

- ◆ Highest Grade: A
- ◆ Alaska's Grade: D+
- ◆ Alaska's Ranking: 44 out of 50 states
  
- ◆ Based on three categories

<b>1. Standards</b>	<b>50 percent</b>
<b>2. Assessment</b>	<b>30 percent</b>
<b>3. Accountability</b>	<b>20 percent</b>

# Student Standards and Assessment

## 1. Standards (50 percent of grade)

Grade: C-

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Whether a state has student standards
- ❖ Quality of reading and mathematics standards

### ◆ Alaska given credit for

- ❖ State has student standards

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ Clear and Specific Standards—Evaluated by American Federation of Teachers
  - ◆ Reading: Grade D
  - ◆ Math: Grade C
- ❖ Rigorous Standards—Evaluated by Council of Basic Education
  - ◆ Reading and Math: Grade D

# Student Standards and Assessment

1. Standards (50 percent of grade)

Grade: C-

◆ **The Department disagrees with *Education Week***

*The Department disagrees given Education Week had an incomplete, draft copy of our standards.*

# Student Standards and Assessment

## 2. Assessment (30 percent of grade)

Grade: F

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Implementation of two types of assessment
  - ◆ Norm-referenced: compares a student with other students taking the same test
  - ◆ Criterion-referenced: compares a student with a set of criteria
- ❖ Whether assessments are tied to standards

### ◆ Alaska given credit for

- ❖ State administers the California Achievement Test (CAT5), a norm-referenced assessment
- ❖ State has a writing assessment

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ No criterion-referenced assessments
- ❖ Assessments are not tied to standards

# Student Standards and Assessment

## 2. Assessment (30 percent of grade)

Grade: F

### ◆ The Department agrees and disagrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees Alaska does not have a comprehensive assessment system based on norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments, which are tied to standards.*

*The Department disagrees Alaska does not have any assessments tied to standards. The Department's writing assessment is tied to standards.*

# Student Standards and Assessment

## 3. Accountability (20 percent of grade)

Grade: C

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Having an exit exam
- ❖ Holding schools accountable
- ❖ Participating in the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)

### ◆ Alaska given credit for

- ❖ State has an exit exam
- ❖ Alaska holds schools accountable through public reporting (*Report Card*)

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ Alaska does not hold schools accountable through rewards and sanctions
- ❖ State does not plan to participate in future NAEP

# Student Standards and Assessment

## 3. Accountability (20 percent of grade)

Grade: C

### ◆ The Department agrees and disagrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees Alaska does not have an accountability system with rewards and sanctions.*

*The Department disagrees it is necessarily in the best interest of the state to participate in the NAEP.*

## Four Areas of Analysis

- Student Standards and Assessments
- Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards**
- Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning
- Financial Resources for Education

# Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

- ◆ Highest Grade: A-
- ◆ Alaska's Grade: D+
- ◆ Alaska's Ranking: 42 out of 50 states

◆ Based on four categories

<b>1. Performance-Based Licensing System</b>	<b>40 percent</b>
<b>2. Professional Development</b>	<b>20 percent</b>
<b>3. Teacher Education</b>	<b>20 percent</b>
<b>4. Teaching In-Field</b>	<b>20 percent</b>

# Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

## 1. Performance-Based Licensing System (40 percent of grade) Grade: C-

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Twelve criteria covering teacher standards, assessments, and national certification

### ◆ Alaska given credit for the State

- ❖ Adopting standards for new teachers
- ❖ Participating in Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)
- ❖ Contributing to INTASC's teacher assessment development

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for the State not having the following

- ❖ Assessment of new teachers
- ❖ Evaluation of new teachers in the classroom
- ❖ Induction program for new teachers
- ❖ Independent professional standards board
- ❖ Incentives for national board certification

# Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

## 1. Performance-Based Licensing System (40 percent of grade) Grade: C-

### ◆ The Department agrees and disagrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees we do not have policies for the criteria where we lost credit; however, the Department is working on proposed regulations which will address the assessment of new teachers, evaluation of new teachers in the classroom, an induction program for new teachers, and incentives for national board certification.*

*The Department disagrees it is necessarily in the best interest of the state to create an independent professional standards board.*

# Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

## **2. Professional Development (20 percent of grade)**

**Grade: D-**

### **◆ Evaluation basis**

- ❖ Percentage of 8th grade math teachers having 16 or more hours of math professional development
- ❖ State providing time for professional development
- ❖ State providing funds for professional development

### **◆ Alaska given credit for**

- ❖ State provides funds for professional development

### **◆ Alaska lost credit for**

- ❖ Only 31 percent of Alaskan 8th grade math teachers had 16 or more hours in math professional development (100 percent was an A)
- ❖ State does not provide time for professional development

# Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

## 2. Professional Development (20 percent of grade)

Grade: D-

### ◆ **The Department agrees and disagrees with *Education Week***

*The Department agrees professional development in a teacher's field is essential and our percentage is low. Through regulation, the Department is currently realigning inservices to address this issue.*

*The Department disagrees the State does not provide time for professional development. Currently, SBOE regulation provides up to 10 days per year for professional development.*

*Additionally, the Department will not increase professional development if it takes away from current student instructional time.*

# Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

## 3. Teacher Education (20 percent of grade)

Grade: F

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ State requirement of an academic major for secondary certification
- ❖ State alignment of teacher education programs with student standards
- ❖ Percentage of teacher candidates from National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accredited institutions
- ❖ Required number of weeks for student teaching

### ◆ Alaska given credit for

- ❖ State requires 12 weeks of student teaching

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ State does not require an academic major for secondary certification
- ❖ State does not align teacher education with standards
- ❖ Alaska education programs are not currently accredited through NCATE

# Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

## 3. Teacher Education (20 percent of grade)

Grade: F

### ◆ The Department agrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees on the importance of all these criteria, and is moving towards implementing the criteria where we lost credit. Proposed changes include a requirement for an endorsement in the content area in which a teacher teaches and aligning teacher education with state student and teacher standards. Additionally, many Alaska teachers come from NCATE accredited institutions outside the state.*

# Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

## 4. Teaching In-Field (20 percent of grade)

Grade: D

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Percentage of secondary teachers who hold a degree in the primary field they teach

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ 64 percent of Alaska teachers hold a degree in the primary field they teach  
(National average is 63 percent)

### ◆ The Department agrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees on the importance of secondary teachers teaching in their primary field and agrees Alaska's percentage is low. The Department has proposed a regulation change requiring secondary teachers to teach only in areas of endorsement.*

## Four Areas of Analysis

- Student Standards and Assessments
- Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards
- Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning**
- Financial Resources for Education

# Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning

- ◆ Highest Grade: B-
- ◆ Alaska's Grade: C-
- ◆ Alaska's Ranking: 16 out of 41 states

- ◆ Based on four categories

<b>1. Class Size</b>	<b>35 percent</b>
<b>2. Student Engagement</b>	<b>20 percent</b>
<b>3. Parent Involvement</b>	<b>20 percent</b>
<b>4. School Autonomy</b>	<b>25 percent</b>

# Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning

## 1. Class Size (35 percent of grade)

Grade: F

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Percentage of 4th graders in classes of 25 or less
- ❖ Percentage of 8th graders in math classes of 25 or less

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ 64 percent of 4th graders in classes of 25 or less
- ❖ 53 percent of 8th grade in math classes 25 or less

### ◆ The Department agrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees with the importance of small class size.*

# Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning

2. Student Engagement (20 percent of grade)

Grade: C

3. Parent Involvement (20 percent of grade)

Grade: C-

◆ Student Engagement & Parent Involvement based on 8th grade principal survey

## ◆ Student engagement results

- ❖ 80 percent reported tardiness not a problem
- ❖ 80 percent reported absenteeism not a problem
- ❖ 64 percent reported classroom behavior not a problem

## ◆ Parent involvement results

- ❖ 78 percent reported more than half of parents participate in open house
- ❖ 78 percent reported more than half of parents participate in parent teacher conferences
- ❖ 55 percent report lack of parent involvement is a minor problem

## Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 2. Student Engagement (20 percent of grade) | Grade: C  |
| 3. Parent Involvement (20 percent of grade) | Grade: C- |

### ◆ The Department agrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees student engagement and parent (family) involvement are important. The Department believes this issue should be addressed by both the state and local school boards.*

# Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning

## 4. School Autonomy (25 percent of grade)

Grade: B

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Having a statewide open enrollment program
- ❖ Quality of charter school legislation
- ❖ Allowing charter schools
- ❖ Permitting site-based management
- ❖ Granting waivers to state regulation

### ◆ Alaska given credit for

- ❖ State allows charter schools
- ❖ State permits site-based management
- ❖ State grants waivers to state regulation

# Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning

## 4. School Autonomy (25 percent of grade)

Grade: B

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ Alaska does not have statewide open enrollment program
- ❖ State's charter school legislation was assessed as weak

### ◆ The Department agrees and disagrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees with the importance of school autonomy; however, given our geography, a statewide open enrollment program would be difficult and not necessarily in the best interest of the state.*

*The Department disagrees our charter school legislation is weak. This legislation is based on local control, allowing local school boards initial authorization of charter schools.*

## Four Areas of Analysis

Student Standards and Assessments

Teachers Ability to Teach to High Standards

Schools Conducive to Teaching and Learning

**Financial Resources for Education**

# Financial Resources for Education

## ◆ Evaluated financial resources for education in three areas

### 1. Adequacy

- ◆ Highest Grade: A
- ◆ Alaska's Grade: D-
- ◆ Alaska's Ranking: 45 out of 50

### 2. Allocation

- ◆ Highest Grade: B+
- ◆ Alaska's Grade: F
- ◆ Alaska's Ranking: 50 out of 50 states

### 3. Equity

- ◆ Highest grade given: A- (excluding Hawaii)
- ◆ Alaska's Grade: F
- ◆ Alaska's Ranking: 42 out of 42 states

# Financial Resources for Education

## 1. Adequacy

Grade: D-

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Per pupil expenditure adjusted for cost differences
- ❖ Percentage change in per pupil expenditures from 1986-1996
- ❖ Percentage of total taxable resources spent on education

### ◆ Alaska given credit for

- ❖ Per pupil expenditure was 83 percent of the determined “adequate” expenditure
- ❖ Total taxable resources spent on education was 4.7 percent, with 5 percent as a perfect score

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ Percentage change in per pupil expenditure from 1986-1996 was -25 percent—the lowest of all states

# Financial Resources for Education

## 1. Adequacy

Grade: D-

### ◆ **The Department agrees and disagrees with *Education Week***

*The Department agrees per pupil expenditure has decreased significantly over the last 10 years.*

*The Department disagrees Alaska's per pupil expenditure is 83 percent of Education Week's determined "adequate" amount given Education Week used an inadequate cost index for Alaska. Education Week's cost index only adjusted for personnel, not for other items such as fuel and transportation. This omission results in a larger per pupil expenditure than actually exists.*

# Financial Resources for Education

## 2. Allocation

Grade: F

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ Percentage of expenditure (excluding capital and debt service) spent on instruction (e.g., teacher salaries and school supplies)

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ Alaska spent 56.3 percent of education expenditures on instruction—the lowest of any state

### ◆ The Department agrees and disagrees with *Education Week*

*The Department agrees Alaska spends fewer funds on instruction than other states.*

*The Department disagrees with Education Week's grading. Given our disperse, small communities, the percentage of education expenditures spend on instruction will be lower than other states.*

# Financial Resources for Education

## 3. Equity

Grade: F

### ◆ Evaluation basis

- ❖ The standard deviation of per pupil district spending, divided by the average district spending per pupil

### ◆ Alaska lost credit for

- ❖ Alaska's equity variation was the highest—30.1 percent

### ◆ The Department disagrees with *Education Week*

*The Department disagrees with Education Week's equity test because their index only adjusted for personnel, not for other items such as fuel and transportation. This omission leads to a larger disparity in per pupil expenditures than actually exists.*

*Alaska continues to be one of three states to meet the federal equity standard.*

# Summary

- ◆ The Department supports the following state policies which address *Education Week's Quality Counts* report
  - ❖ Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics\*
  - ❖ A standards-based assessment system tied to standards\*
  - ❖ A school accountability program including rewards and sanctions\*
  - ❖ An increase in education funding tied to improving student performance\*
  - ❖ A teacher education system resulting in teachers being able to teach to high standards

\*In bills HB351/SB257