

OVERVIEW

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1-13-01

**Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
Public School Funding Formula Review
FY90 - FY00**

- FY88 public school funding formula was revised to instructional unit method.
- FY93 the base of the public school funding formula increased 1.7% or approximately \$12 million.
- FY99 public school funding formula was revised to students per school method.
- FY99 the base of the public school funding program increased 3.3% or approximately \$21 million.
- From FY90 to FY00 enrollment increased 25% and the legislature fully funded the increase.
- From FY90 to FY00 inflation has increased approximately 30% but the public school funding program was increased 5% during this time.
- Property values and federal impact aid increased in FY01 and FY02 reducing the state share by \$29 million.
- Property values statewide should continue to increase 2% to 5% annually.
- From FY90 to FY00 municipalities have increased local contributions to education by 35% or \$98 million.

- Continuing Education

Ohio-\$1.8 million for 30 math and science teachers who commit to 3 years in the district to obtain master's degrees

Many States and Districts-mentoring programs for new teachers

- Miscellaneous Goodies

Various States and Districts-laptop computers, gym memberships, 401Ks, moving costs

"A tax exemption or signing bonuses may not be the right answer here. But when states from New York to California are wading into a teacher bidding war, Oregon had better offer something more than scenery." *Portland Oregonian*, May 2000

Examples of Teacher Incentives Offered in Other States

- **Increased Salaries**
 - Maryland-10%
 - Virginia-\$90 million over 2 years
 - New York City-15% increase for teachers in schools on academic watch list
 - Detroit-\$3000 for high-need subject areas
 - Los Angeles-\$5000 for bilingual

- **Scholarship-loan Programs**
 - Virginia-\$3000 forgivable loans
 - North Carolina-\$6500 annually, requiring 4 years of teaching after graduation (3 if they work in "low performance" schools)

- **Signing Bonuses**
 - Massachusetts-\$20,000 over 4 years for 150 teachers in urban areas
 - Virginia-\$1000 for hard-to-fill areas
 - Maryland-for top graduates
 - Texas-\$3000 for special education
 - Philadelphia-\$4500 for teachers who stay for 3 years

- **Tax Exemptions**
 - California-proposed exemption from state income tax for certificated teachers

- **Student Performance Bonuses**
 - California-proposed \$5000 bonus for each teacher in a school with student test score improvement of 20%; lesser amounts for lower improvement rates

- **Low Interest Home Mortgages**
 - Maryland
 - California-for teachers to live within school boundaries

- **Double Dipping**
 - Maryland-retired teachers who return to classroom can continue to draw pension

State of Alaska
Department of Education and Early Development
Average Age of School Facilities

YEAR	AGE
1990	19
1992	20
1994	22
1996	23
1998	24
2000	26

20 • Faculty

C-16. PERCENT CHANGE IN AVERAGE SALARIES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS, 1988-89 TO 1989-90

1. NEW HAMPSHIRE	8.6
2. CONNECTICUT	8.3
3. LOUISIANA	8.1
4. NORTH CAROLINA	8.1
5. NEW JERSEY	8.0
6. MARYLAND	8.0
7. MISSISSIPPI	7.9
8. MAINE	7.8
9. NEBRASKA	7.0
10. FLORIDA	6.8
11. VIRGINIA	6.8
12. PENNSYLVANIA	6.7
13. VERMONT	6.3
14. NEW YORK	6.2
15. SOUTH CAROLINA	6.2
16. NEVADA	6.1
17. MASSACHUSETTS	6.1
18. DELAWARE	5.7
19. TENNESSEE	5.6
UNITED STATES	5.4
20. KENTUCKY	5.4
21. RHODE ISLAND	5.3
22. ILLINOIS	5.3
23. OHIO	5.2
24. NEW MEXICO	5.1
25. CALIFORNIA	5.0
26. MINNESOTA	5.0
27. IDAHO	5.0
28. OREGON	4.9
29. KANSAS	4.8
30. MISSOURI	4.7
31. DIST. OF COL.	4.6
32. WASHINGTON	4.4
33. WEST VIRGINIA	4.3
34. HAWAII	4.1
35. COLORADO	4.1
36. INDIANA	4.0*
37. UTAH	3.9
38. IOWA	3.8
39. SOUTH DAKOTA	3.8
40. WISCONSIN	3.7
41. TEXAS	3.7
42. GEORGIA	3.6
43. NORTH DAKOTA	3.4
44. MICHIGAN	3.4*
45. ALASKA	3.4
46. ARIZONA	3.2
47. OKLAHOMA	3.1
48. ARKANSAS	2.9
49. MONTANA	2.7
50. WYOMING	1.8
51. ALABAMA	1.2
MEAN	5.4
MEDIAN	5.0
RANGE	7.4
SDEV.	0.7
CV	13.0

Computed from NEA Research, Estimates data bank.

*Data estimated by NEA.

C-17. ESTIMATED AVERAGE SALARIES OF INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1988-89 (REVISED)

1. ALASKA	842,813*
2. DIST. OF COL.	42,310
3. CONNECTICUT	38,708
4. MASSACHUSETTS	38,419
5. NEW YORK	38,100
6. CALIFORNIA	35,882
7. MICHIGAN	35,741*
8. RHODE ISLAND	35,364
9. MARYLAND	35,072
10. NEW JERSEY	34,627
11. DELAWARE	32,736
12. WISCONSIN	32,500
13. ILLINOIS	32,207
14. ARIZONA	31,985
15. HAWAII	31,945
16. MINNESOTA	31,750
17. PENNSYLVANIA	31,555
UNITED STATES	30,969
18. OHIO	30,934
19. OREGON	30,680
20. COLORADO	30,614
21. WASHINGTON	30,525
22. INDIANA	30,357
23. NEVADA	30,150
24. GEORGIA	29,752*
25. VIRGINIA	29,655
26. KANSAS	29,248
27. WYOMING	28,844
28. FLORIDA	28,697
29. MONTANA	28,415
30. TEXAS	27,565
31. NEW HAMPSHIRE	27,448*
32. VERMONT	27,265*
33. MISSOURI	27,020
34. NORTH CAROLINA	26,833
35. SOUTH CAROLINA	26,762
36. IOWA	26,590
37. TENNESSEE	26,512
38. ALABAMA	26,150
39. KENTUCKY	26,026
40. MAINE	25,779
41. NEBRASKA	25,335
42. NEW MEXICO	25,003
43. UTAH	23,955
44. IDAHO	23,640
45. MISSISSIPPI	23,297
46. OKLAHOMA	23,200
47. LOUISIANA	23,150
48. NORTH DAKOTA	22,994
49. WEST VIRGINIA	22,897
50. ARKANSAS	22,193
51. SOUTH DAKOTA	21,250
MEAN	30,959
MEDIAN	29,248
RANGE	21,568
SDEV.	7461.4
CV	24.1

NEA Research, Estimates data bank.

C-18. ESTIMATED AVERAGE SALARIES OF INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF AS PERCENT OF NATIONAL AVERAGE, 1988-89 (REVISED)

1. ALASKA	138.3*
2. DIST. OF COL.	136.6
3. CONNECTICUT	125.0
4. MASSACHUSETTS	124.1
5. NEW YORK	123.0
6. CALIFORNIA	115.9
7. MICHIGAN	115.4*
8. RHODE ISLAND	114.8
9. MARYLAND	113.2
10. NEW JERSEY	111.8
11. DELAWARE	105.7
12. WISCONSIN	104.9
13. ILLINOIS	104.0
14. ARIZONA	103.3
15. HAWAII	103.2
16. MINNESOTA	102.5
17. PENNSYLVANIA	101.9
UNITED STATES	100.0
18. OHIO	99.9
19. OREGON	99.1
20. COLORADO	98.9
21. WASHINGTON	98.6
22. INDIANA	98.0
23. NEVADA	97.4
24. GEORGIA	96.1*
25. VIRGINIA	95.8
26. KANSAS	94.4
27. WYOMING	93.1
28. FLORIDA	92.7
29. MONTANA	91.8
30. TEXAS	89.0
31. NEW HAMPSHIRE	88.6*
32. VERMONT	88.0*
33. MISSOURI	87.2
34. NORTH CAROLINA	86.6
35. SOUTH CAROLINA	86.4
36. IOWA	85.9
37. TENNESSEE	85.6
38. ALABAMA	84.4
39. KENTUCKY	84.0
40. MAINE	83.2
41. NEBRASKA	81.8
42. NEW MEXICO	80.7
43. UTAH	77.4
44. IDAHO	76.3
45. MISSISSIPPI	75.2
46. OKLAHOMA	74.9
47. LOUISIANA	74.8
48. NORTH DAKOTA	74.2
49. WEST VIRGINIA	73.9
50. ARKANSAS	71.7
51. SOUTH DAKOTA	68.6
MEAN	100.0
MEDIAN	94.4
RANGE	69.7
SDEV.	24.1
CV	24.1

Computed from NEA Research, Estimates data bank.

**SUMMARY TABLE G. ESTIMATED AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARIES OF
TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF AND OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

REGION AND STATE	1998-99 (REVISED) AVERAGE SALARY FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS				1999-2000 AVERAGE SALARY FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS				% CHANGE OVER	
	INSTRUC- TIONAL STAFF	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ALL TEACHERS	INSTRUC- TIONAL STAFF	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ALL TEACHERS	1998-99 (CURRENT \$)	1989-90 (CONSTANT \$)
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
50 STATES AND D.C.	42,459	40,293	41,155	40,582	43,460	41,310	42,212	41,575	2.45	6.9
NEW ENGLAND	51,454	45,333	45,321	45,044	52,588	46,341	46,370	46,065	2.27	6.9
CONNECTICUT	53,429	52,386	54,594	51,584	54,400	53,300	55,600	52,500	1.78	4.6
MAINE	36,125	34,576	35,650	34,906	36,903	35,294	36,390	35,631	2.08	6.9
MASSACHUSETTS	56,829	44,877	44,877	45,075	58,053	45,924	45,924	46,127	2.33	7.2
NEW HAMPSHIRE	45,187	37,405	37,405	37,405	46,161	38,162	38,162	38,162	2.02	6.2
RHODE ISLAND	51,689	50,262	50,396	50,322	52,803	52,166	52,305	52,228	3.79	16.8
VERMONT	37,081	37,496	36,062	36,800	37,880	38,014	36,560	37,308	1.38	3.7
MID EAST	50,223	48,056	49,755	48,704	51,410	49,173	50,979	49,636	1.91	9.4
DELAWARE	44,916	43,026	43,330	43,164	45,884	43,920	44,230	44,061	2.08	6.5
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	42,974	47,640	46,404	47,150	43,900	48,630	47,368	48,130	2.08	1.1
MARYLAND	44,873	41,620	43,592	42,526	45,840	42,405	44,414	43,328	1.89	-3.8
NEW JERSEY	54,342	50,088	53,079	51,193	55,513	51,048	54,096	52,174	1.92	17.9
NEW YORK	50,300	48,785	50,744	49,437	51,384	49,511	51,499	50,173	1.49	3.9
PENNSYLVANIA	49,566	48,157	48,781	48,457	51,086	50,338	51,212	49,765	2.70	20.4
SOUTH EAST	37,065	35,434	36,422	35,817	38,046	36,551	37,541	36,936	3.12	9.3
ALABAMA	36,740	35,820	35,820	35,820	37,532	36,564	36,564	36,564	2.08	18.8
ARKANSAS	32,879	31,445	33,220	32,350	33,587	32,199	34,017	33,126	2.40	19.5
FLORIDA	37,048	35,916	35,916	35,916	37,846	36,662	36,662	36,662	2.08	2.6
GEORGIA	41,591	39,076	40,532	39,675	42,487	40,703	42,220	41,327	4.16	19.0
KENTUCKY	37,251	35,076	36,580	35,526	38,054	35,846	37,383	36,306	2.20	11.4
LOUISIANA	33,943	32,510	32,510	32,510	34,674	33,186	33,186	33,186	2.08	10.1
MISSISSIPPI	30,743	29,129	30,056	29,530	31,405	29,735	30,681	30,144	2.08	0.1
NORTH CAROLINA	37,279	35,919	36,399	36,098	39,590	38,146	38,657	38,336	6.20	10.9
SOUTH CAROLINA	36,217	34,240	35,110	34,506	36,997	35,915	36,828	36,194	4.89	7.2
TENNESSEE	37,491	36,109	37,545	36,500	38,299	36,998	38,470	37,399	2.46	11.5
VIRGINIA	38,265	36,255	39,426	37,475	39,089	37,067	40,309	38,314	2.24	-0.1
WEST VIRGINIA	35,451	33,961	34,842	34,244	36,215	34,667	35,566	34,956	2.08	23.4
GREAT LAKES	45,014	43,169	45,014	43,634	46,151	44,364	46,279	44,850	2.79	9.9
ILLINOIS	47,312	43,655	50,140	45,569	48,331	44,893	51,562	46,861	2.84	15.2
INDIANA	42,501	41,328	40,997	41,163	43,417	42,262	41,923	42,093	2.26	9.9
MICHIGAN	48,207	48,207	48,207	48,207	49,246	49,209	49,209	49,209	2.08	7.0
OHIO	41,986	40,184	41,335	40,566	43,600	41,800	43,000	42,200	4.03	9.0
WISCONSIN	43,507	40,423	44,161	40,657	44,444	41,263	45,079	41,502	2.08	4.9
PLAINS	37,385	35,326	36,074	35,687	38,155	36,150	36,923	36,523	2.34	5.1
IOWA	36,209	34,143	35,588	34,927	36,989	34,988	36,468	35,791	2.47	7.9
KANSAS	39,690	37,405	37,405	37,405	40,340	38,527	38,527	38,527	3.00	8.1
MINNESOTA	40,707	39,816	39,092	39,458	41,584	40,643	39,904	40,278	2.08	0.9
MISSOURI	36,512	34,208	35,293	34,746	37,299	35,014	36,125	35,565	2.36	5.9
NEBRASKA	36,571	32,880	32,880	32,880	37,359	33,473	33,473	33,473	1.67	5.8
NORTH DAKOTA	29,215	29,199	28,571	28,976	29,844	29,838	29,196	29,610	2.19	3.7
SOUTH DAKOTA	29,387	28,610	28,422	28,552	30,020	29,204	29,012	29,145	2.08	10.3
SOUTH WEST	37,367	33,984	35,042	34,462	38,208	34,799	35,949	35,314	2.47	5.1
ARIZONA	45,785	35,025	35,025	35,025	46,771	35,650	35,650	35,650	1.72	-2.2
NEW MEXICO	33,714	32,242	32,786	32,398	34,810	32,724	33,774	32,937	1.66	7.3
OKLAHOMA	32,783	30,969	31,343	31,149	33,489	31,612	31,994	31,796	2.08	11.1
TEXAS	36,999	34,388	35,703	35,041	37,796	35,303	36,653	35,973	2.66	5.5
ROCKY MOUNTAINS	36,123	34,912	35,358	35,125	37,139	35,759	36,220	35,980	2.43	6.6
COLORADO	39,421	37,901	38,150	38,025	40,270	38,700	38,955	38,827	2.11	1.8
IDAHO	35,643	34,167	33,954	34,063	37,055	35,520	35,299	35,412	3.96	19.7
MONTANA	30,034	30,979	32,150	31,356	31,551	31,623	32,819	32,008	2.08	2.9
UTAH	33,982	33,007	32,887	32,950	34,714	33,693	33,571	33,635	2.08	14.5
WYOMING	34,683	33,714	33,302	33,500	35,633	34,500	34,100	34,300	2.39	-1.7
FAR WEST	45,113	43,632	44,457	43,905	46,113	44,549	45,406	44,830	2.11	0.2
ALASKA	48,085	46,845	46,845	46,845	49,121	47,262	47,262	47,262	0.89	-11.7
CALIFORNIA	46,593	44,763	47,262	45,400	47,597	45,694	48,245	46,344	2.08	-1.6
HAWAII	41,547	39,871	39,871	40,377	42,442	40,699	40,699	41,216	2.08	3.7
NEVADA	41,007	38,552	39,338	38,883	41,891	39,353	40,155	39,691	2.08	4.6
OREGON	43,142	42,496	42,805	42,833	44,072	43,379	43,694	43,723	2.08	14.3
WASHINGTON	40,596	38,723	38,651	38,692	41,471	39,528	39,454	39,496	2.08	4.6

22. Students with disabilities must be involved in all district and state wide educational assessments such as CAT testing and Benchmarks. This has increased costs for IEP meetings to make determinations and provision of appropriate accommodations.
23. Costs for Extended School Year has escalated dramatically in past years by at least 200% as the definition for qualification for ESY has been extended by the Federal Law. Transportation and provision of related services is especially expensive for this summer program.
24. Extended school day must be considered and provided if student qualifies via the IEP team. this is especially utilized in the preschool and kindergarten program where some students need access to a full day program.
25. Provision of special education services in Headstart programs is now required at district expense.
26. The least restrictive environment clause and opportunity to be with non-disabled peers has resulted in increased costs for itinerant special education staff providing training and services to preschool students with disabilities in private preschools.
27. Increased costs for recruitment and training of special education staff. Required TA training offered on Saturdays. Recruitment teams sent out of state to recruit teachers and the need for recruitment bonuses for new staff.

required to provide. As an example; the district, at a cost of \$8000 each, may have to purchase a computerized speech system, Dynavox, that is used to assist students in basic communication. The student must also have the assistive technology available to them both at school and at home thereby having the district purchase two. Some of the Dynavoxes at home have been broken and must be replaced by the district.

12. The district may have to provide recreational therapy and / or social services for students with disabilities if required by the IEP team in order for the child to receive educational benefit. There is a large amount of parent counseling and training that is now required also.
13. More paperwork and meeting requirements are now included in the IEP and in dealing with evaluations and assessments. IEP meetings with parents have gone from 1 meeting to 3 meetings per year, requiring all ASD members of the team to be present.
14. Increased numbers of health services staff due to the requirement for medical intervention. Districts must provide the level of health services up to what a doctor would be needed to provide.
15. Additional disabilities were classified for certification for special education over the last 13 years. In 1990 Other Health Impaired, Autism, and Traumatic Brain Injury were added. The district has experienced a significant increase in the number of students served. Attention deficit disorder is an area where special education gets involved and does the evaluations, holds the parent meetings, hears the complaints, and provides the specialized programs, however the state does not include them in the special education ADM counts. ASD currently has 200-300 students with this disorder. Students may qualify for special education as Other Health Impaired or a 504 plan. We have experienced a significant increase in students certified as Emotionally Disturbed. In 1987 we had 271 enrolled, while we had 698 students in 1999. Autism was added as an area of disability in 1990, the district has gone from 0 to 115 currently served. While the total numbers may seem small each student receives substantial specialized supports and services from the district.
16. There has been an increase in the number of students who are sent out of state for special education placement at the request of parents or DFYS. The district has to pick up the educational expenditure for each child if the placement is required for the student to receive educational benefit according to the IEP team decision..
17. There has been an increase in the district's litigation expenditures from parents who want specific teaching methodology and services provided to their child in which the district disagrees.
18. The district is required to prepare a functional behavioral assessment for a student's behavior that interferes with their education. A Positive Behavioral Intervention Plan must then be prepared which requires 3 to 4 teachers to spend 3 to 4 hours preparing. This has created many more meetings requiring more of the teachers and psychologists time.
19. IDEA 97 has extended the age required for student transition plans to age 14. As a result of the audit in 1996 the district is now required to provide a more extensive plan involving a variety of stakeholders. This has increased the number of vocational education teachers and has resulted in the increase in expenditures for the district's middle school, high school and ACE / ACT programs. The district must also coordinate with other outside agencies to assist the student upon leaving the educational system.
20. Increased protections and due process rights for parents and students with disabilities, active involvement in all IEP team decisions to include initial referral for evaluation to all discipline meetings such as a manifestation determination. This has increased staff expenditures for IEP team meetings as school teams attempt to have meetings at times convenient for working parents and difficult schedules.
21. Increased requests for independent educational evaluations from parents. This is a right of a parent to obtain at full cost to the district (approximately \$600-\$1200 per evaluation) if the parent disagrees with a district evaluation.

DECISIONS AT THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEVEL THAT HAVE IMPACTED SPECIAL EDUCATION PRACTICE AND FINANCIAL EXPENDITURES FOR THE ASD SINCE 1987

Special education in the Anchorage School District has experienced many new mandated requirements, technological improvements assisting those with medical needs, and student enrollment increases since 1987. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 1990 and 1997, in 1994 (OSEP) and the 9th Circuit Court supported inclusionary practice recommendations, and the state had a federal compliance audit in 1996. Each of these events put additional obligations and requirements on ASD that have increased our expenditures in the provision special education supports and services. Summarized below are the major changes in the special education program over the last 13 years. (not in order)

1. ASD must provide counseling to students certified for special education if required as part of the student's IEP.
2. ASD must provide mobility training to students certified for special education if needed as part of the IEP.
3. In 1993 the policies and practices for the provision of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with a focus on the regular education class was re-emphasized. This has required the IEP team to first consider the neighborhood school for students with disabilities. The landmark case heard before the 9th Circuit in 1994-Rachel Holland vs. Sacramento School District set the floor. This has increased the number of teacher assistants, health service providers, related services staff, and special education training to all the regular education teachers.
4. The IEP meetings must include a regular education teacher. Many more substitute teachers are needed to provide classroom coverage. Staff is paid an addenda if they must stay after working hours for an IEP.
5. There is a requirement to provide special education services to students with disabilities beginning at age 3.
6. There are more partnership requirements with charter and private schools requiring more administrative and personnel time. Students with disabilities are entitled to special education services if they attend either charter or private schools.
7. New medical improvements require the district to provide both the equipment and training.
8. A Manifestation Determination meeting is required when a special education student is suspended from school for more than 10 days within a school year. The IEP team must meet and determine if the student's disability impacted their behavior and if the district was providing the appropriate supports and services for the student as designated on the IEP.
9. Students, certified for special education, not in school must receive their special education supports and services as designated on the IEP. New alternative programs for students who are expelled or on long term suspension had to be created. Students, up to age 22, who are certified for special education when last attending public schools but now reside in correctional facilities must receive special education.
10. Due to medical advances and technology more children with severe disabilities survive infancy and are attending public schools. This has lead to an increased number of students with more significant disabilities and the need for more teachers and specialists. Educational services are provided in a variety of locations to include home, hospital or school.
11. Assistive technology may be required for a student with disabilities to receive educational benefit. This may require specialized and expensive equipment and extensive training for staff and parents. This district has experienced a large increase in this area due to the new medical and learning technology that has recently become available and which the district is

grown to 19 students from six countries. These students spoke three languages - Spanish, Russian, and Lingala. Movement toward greater diversity had begun.

In the fall semester of 1998, the Newcomer Center served 24 students from 13 different countries; these newcomers spoke seven different languages - Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, Korean, Polish, Chichewa, and Wolof. Presently, in the spring of 1999, Newcomer Center enrollment has grown to 27 students from 14 countries. Chinese brings the current language total to eight.

All together, over the course of the past four semesters, 53 different students have attended the Newcomer Center, 22 in 1997-98 and 34 in 1998-99 (including three from 1997-98 who attended for a second semester). Twenty-nine attended for two semesters and 24 attended for one semester; approximately 10 of the latter group may remain in the program in the fall of 1999.

Another interesting trend parallels this increase in number and diversity. There is a steady decline in enrollees' ability to read English, as measured by the IPT - Reading assessment. At the same time, more recently enrolled newcomers lack functional literacy in their first language. In the fall of 1997, all entered with some degree of first language literacy. In the spring of 1998, three students possessed only minimal literacy in their first language. Eight students served during the 1998-99 school year could not read in their first language. This finding is particularly disturbing since first language literacy is an important indicator of academic success in English. Learning to read for the first time in a second language has proven to be especially difficult.

These demographics reveal a noticeable need for intensive English language instruction for recently immigrated, non-English-speakers in the Anchorage School District. Over the past four semesters, students served by the Newcomer Center have grown steadily in number, in linguistic complexity, and in cultural and ethnic diversity. Unfortunately, the prior academic preparation of the student group as a whole shows a decline. These factors combine to dramatically increase the difficulty of an already daunting instructional challenge.

Are there trends relative to the increase in budget?

The Bilingual Education Program has been in existence in the ASD since the 1977-78 school year. Beginning with a program serving 361 students in grades K-12. The program has grown to serving approximately 12.5 times the number of students originally served. The most recent count, September 2000, confirms 3035 students in grades K-6, and 1816 students in grades 7-12.

During the 1987-88 school-term a total of 2,265 students were served in grades K-12. These students spoke a total of 55 different languages. Student demographics have changed tremendously since that time. With the increased number of students has come an increase in the number of languages spoken by students. That number as of last year was 87 different languages. Since the 1994-95 school-term ASD has experienced an increase in the number of students from war-torn countries which include students who have been orphaned or were refugees. Students speaking 7 different languages made a dramatic increase as depicted in the chart below:

Year	Serbo-Croatian	Mien	Hmong	Lao	Albanian	Russian	Total # of Languages
94/95	13	41	0	188	50	72	71
95/96	12	75	0	199	53	87	84
97/98	17	119	0	306	52	89	86
98/99	18	169	95	345	58	95	87
99/00	18	166	170	346	76	113	87

Bilingual/ESL education is organized conceptually to view the student holistically and to help students clarify options compatible with their individual goals. The evolving academic, social, and linguistic needs and potential of each student must be understood, assessed, and addressed. The program supports the English language development of students and promotes the timely acquisition of content by building on students' prior knowledge and experiences through strategic use of native languages and the learners' evolving proficiency in English.

In order to provide a program to meet the growing needs of the students it has been necessary to also increase the number of staff working with students.

Year	Learning Centers	Elementary Teachers	Tutors	Secondary Teachers	Counselors
94/95	7	7	66	10	0
95/96	7	7	76	14	0
97/98	12	10	90	16	2
98/99	11	10	98	23.8	3.7
99/00	14	12.5	102	34	4.7

Changing Student Population

The Newcomer Center opened in September of 1997 with eleven newly immigrated, non-English-speaking students. All were Spanish-speakers from only three different countries. A relatively homogenous class resulted. By January of 1998, the group had

**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BILINGUAL/MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

MEMORANDUM

October 4, 2000

TO: Alden Thern
FROM: Maxine Hill, Supervisor
Bilingual/Multicultural Education Programs
SUBJECT: BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Since 1987-88 have there been any mandates with regards to Bilingual?

Since 1987-88 there have been changes in the regulations, Alaska Education Regulations Chapter 34, which govern the provision of bilingual education in the State of Alaska. The purpose as stated in 4 AAC 34.10 is to meet the needs of students of limited English-speaking ability by providing educational opportunity to identified students through the establishment of bilingual education programs. Reauthorization of the regulations occurred during the 1998-99 school term. The reauthorization brought about many changes.

Each school district that enrolls limited-English-proficient (LEP) pupils is responsible for taking appropriate steps to develop their English-language skills and to provide them meaningful participation in the school district's academic program consistent with applicable state and federal standards (4 AAC 34.055). Meaningful participation is defined in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as equal educational opportunities. In assessing compliance with Title VI a twofold standard applies: (1) English language development; and (2) meaningful participation of LEP students in the district's educational program. "There is no equity of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education." Lau v. Nichols

The District has an obligation under Title VI to implement a program of services designed to provide LEP students with equal educational opportunities. The District is expected to effectively implement the educational approach that they have adopted and are expected to provide the necessary resources to implement the program.

What expenses have been incurred because of the new regulations?

The change, which impacts ASD most, focuses on assessment and identification of limited-English-proficient students. Prior to the 1999-2000 school-term the District was responsible for identification and assessment of language dominance for the purpose of categorizing students in one of the five Lau categories. In this process only one instrument was used to assess oral language proficiency. Since the new regulations were adopted in the 1999-2000 school-term the assessment procedure mandates measuring English-language proficiency with respect to each student's ability to speak, read, write, and comprehend English. This has necessitated increased costs to select and purchase the appropriate and necessary assessment instruments; orient and train qualified staff to administer the assessment instruments and evaluate the results.

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT SUMMARY FOR STATE DOE PROJECT

Description of Item	Starting		Actual			Actual/3/Budgeted		
	Fiscal Year	Amount	Ending Fiscal Year	Amount	Percentage Change	Ending Fiscal Year	Amount	Percentage Change
State Foundation Calculations (per ADM) [1]								
State Foundation Basic Need	87/88	4,824.76	99/00	5,409.02	12.11%	00/01	0	-100.00%
State Foundation Aid	87/88	3,149.10	99/00	4,122.87	30.92%	00/01	0	-100.00%
State Supplemental Budgetary Expenditures (per ADM)								
Instruction (Reg., VocEd., Gifted, Bilingual)	87/88	2,449.55	99/00	3,153.58	28.74%	00/01	3,389.16	38.36%
Special education instruction (Instruction, Support)	87/88	589.26	99/00	972.34	65.01%	00/01	1,037.42	76.05%
Pupil support (Students, Instruction)	87/88	292.76	99/00	490.14	67.42%	00/01	508.50	73.69%
School administration	87/88	364.39	99/00	413.27	13.41%	00/01	417.95	14.70%
District administration (Admin., Support)	87/88	364.78	99/00	296.98	-18.59%	00/01	271.85	-25.48%
Operation and maintenance of plant	87/88	797.53	99/00	933.39	17.04%	00/01	915.26	14.76%
Community service	87/88	5.03	99/00	7.83	55.61%	00/01	7.78	54.45%
Debt service	87/88	-	99/00	0.78	#DIV/0!	00/01	-	#DIV/0!
Pupil activity (Student Activities)	87/88	53.75	99/00	54.66	1.70%	00/01	56.92	5.89%
Total expenditures	87/88	4,917.06	99/00	6,322.99	28.59%	00/01	6,804.82	34.32%
CAFR GAAP Expenditures, 00/01 based on Budgetary Expenditures (per ADM)								
Personnel Services	87/88	3,567.67	99/00	4,501.79	26.18%	00/01	4,690.51	31.47%
Employee Benefits	87/88	883.94	99/00	1,166.46	31.96%	00/01	1,235.80	39.81%
Purchased Services	87/88	455.06	99/00	769.31	69.06%	00/01	718.84	57.97%
Supplies and Materials	87/88	169.79	99/00	258.11	52.02%	00/01	228.43	34.54%
Capital Outlay	87/88	36.64	99/00	102.70	180.28%	00/01	50.33	37.35%
Other Expenses	87/88	40.72	99/00	37.92	-6.89%	00/01	31.10	-23.63%
Total	87/88	5,153.82	99/00	6,836.29	32.65%	00/01	6,955.02	34.95%
Purchased Supplies								
6th Grade English Textbook	92/93	\$ 22.44	00/01	\$ 35.88	59.89%			
Xerographic Paper, white 8.5 x 11	92/93	18.30	00/01	21.30	16.39%			
Paper, newsprint ruled, grades 1-2	92/93	3.91	00/01	5.66	44.76%			
Students & Buildings								
ADM K-12 & Special Ed.	87/88	38,734.41	99/00	48,157.22	24.33%	00/01	48,576.00	25.41%
Bilingual/Bicultural ADM Category A (Non-English)	87/88	560.50	99/00	911.00	62.53%			
Bilingual/Bicultural ADM Category B (Mostly Non-English)	87/88	280.50	99/00	2,319.00	726.74%			
Bilingual/Bicultural ADM Category C (Bilingual)	87/88	177.00	99/00	544.00	207.34%			
Bilingual/Bicultural ADM Category D (Mostly English)	87/88	271.00	99/00	457.00	68.63%			
Bilingual/Bicultural ADM Category E (English/slight foreign)	87/88	349.50	99/00	115.00	-67.10%			
Total Bilingual ADM	87/88	1,638.50	99/00	4,346.00	165.24%	00/01	5,003.00	205.34%
Special Education ADM Gifted	87/88	1,445.00	99/00	1,874.00	29.42%	00/01	2,109.00	45.65%
Special Education ADM Resources	87/88	2,809.00	99/00	5,422.00	93.02%	00/01	5,242.00	86.61%
Special Education ADM Self-Contained	87/88	1,060.00	99/00	1,037.00	-2.17%	00/01	1,243.00	17.26%
Special Education ADM Intensive	87/88	415.00	99/00	734.00	76.87%	00/01	780.00	87.95%
Total Special Education ADM	87/88	5,732.00	99/00	9,067.00	58.18%	00/01	9,374.00	63.54%
Special Ed - Intensive + Bilingual ADM	87/88	6,955.50	99/00	12,679.00	82.29%	00/01	13,597.00	95.49%
# of School Buildings	87/88	72.00	99/00	87.00	20.83%			
Salary History								
Average Budgeted Teacher's Salary	87/88	40,693.00	00/01	48,748.00	19.79%			
Teachers - Low	87/88	23,863.00	00/01	32,600.00	36.61%			
Teachers - High	87/88	51,245.00	00/01	62,766.00	22.48%			
Bus Driver - Low	87/88	9.60	00/01	11.68	21.67%			
Bus Driver - High	87/88	11.50	00/01	15.88	38.09%			
Bus Attendant - Low	87/88	7.30	00/01	8.73	19.59%			
Bus Attendant - High	87/88	9.00	00/01	13.28	47.56%			
Totem - Low	87/88	7.25	00/01	10.90	50.34%			
Totem - High	87/88	11.00	00/01	17.73	61.18%			
Custodian - Low	87/88	8.00	00/01	8.99	12.38%			
Custodian - High	87/88	14.56	00/01	16.20	11.26%			
Maintenance - Low	87/88	12.38	00/01	16.20	30.86%			
Maintenance - High	87/88	18.13	00/01	23.75	31.00%			
Principal - Low	87/88	52,165.00	00/01	62,830.00	20.44%			
Principal - High	87/88	71,470.00	00/01	90,584.00	26.74%			
ACE - Low	89/90	113.00	00/01	125.90	11.42%			
ACE - High	89/90	292.68	00/01	377.51	28.98%			
Major Medical Insurance (per eligible employee)								
Total Cost	87/88	2,429.40	00/01	7,144.80	194.10%			
District Contribution	87/88	2,384.00	00/01	5,121.50	114.83%			
Utilities (per sq. foot)								
Heat for Buildings [2]	88/89	0.36	99/00	0.27	-22.81%	00/01	0.27	-22.86%
Water and Sewer	88/89	0.07	99/00	0.08	15.29%	00/01	0.07	2.84%
Electricity	88/89	0.76	99/00	0.93	21.22%	00/01	0.94	22.95%
Refuse	88/89	0.09	99/00	0.10	13.42%	00/01	0.09	3.89%

[1] Includes full FTE funding for Family Partnership Charter School in 1999-2000 which is not permanent.

[2] Contract with Aurora Gas gave ASD a 10.9% discount starting 7/1/98. It expires 6/30/01, we have been informed to expect a price increase.

[3] Numbers based on 2000-2001 actuals.



**Anchorage
School
District**

4600 DeBarr Road
R O. Box 196614
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6614
(907) 742-4000

SCHOOL BOARD

Peggy Robinson
President

Dave Werdal
Vice President

Bettye Davis
Clerk

Rita J. Holthouse
Treasurer

Tom Anderson

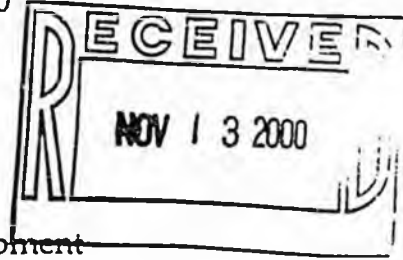
Harriet A. Drummond

Debbie Ossiander

**ACTING
SUPERINTENDENT**

Carol Comeau

November 9, 2000



Mr. Eddy Jeans
School Finance Manager
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, AK 99801-1894

Dear Eddy:

The Anchorage School District appreciates being asked to participate in the Department's effort to provide information to the Legislature regarding educational adequacy. The Educational Adequacy Retreat brought together urban and rural communities, school districts and interested parties to identify common interest and concerns regarding educating the students of Alaska.

Pursuant to your request, we are enclosing comparative information about the Anchorage School District for FY 1987-88 and the current year. For certain items, if information was not available for those particular years, then we have so indicated and provided information closest to that date.

We hope that the statistical/cost comparisons and narrative information relative to special needs mandates will help support the need for additional funding. This information along with all of the other mandates that have been imposed on the districts have resulted in increased per student costs.

If you have any questions or we can be of further assistance, please contact me at 742-4369.

Sincerely yours,

Janet Stokesbary
Chief Financial Officer

Enclosures

cc Carol Comeau, Superintendent (Acting)

APPENDIX B

Educational Adequacy Retreat Participants

Patricia Phillips
City of Pelican
P.O. Box 737
Pelican, AK 99832

Rich Kronberg
NEA-Alaska
1870 S. Bragaw, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99508

Bob Coghill, Board Member
Fairbanks North Star Borough SD
160 City Lights Boulevard
Fairbanks, AK 99712

John Davis, Superintendent
Bering Strait School District
P.O. Box 225
Unalakleet, AK 99684

Janice Loudon, President
Alaska Parent Teacher Association
P.O. Box 201496
Anchorage, AK 99520-1496

Kerry Jarrell, Business Manager
Bering Strait School District
P.O. Box 225
Unalakleet, AK 99684

Willie P. Thomas, Mayor
City of Buckland
P.O. Box 49
Buckland, AK 99727

Thomas Boedeker, City Manager
City of Soldotna
177 North Birch Street
Soldotna, AK 99669

Melvin Otton
P.O. Box 53043
Koyuk, AK 99753

Pat Abney
Municipality of Anchorage
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

Bob Christal, Superintendent
Anchorage Schools
P.O. Box 196614
Anchorage, AK 99519-6614

Larry "Woody" Wilson, Superintendent
Wrangell Public Schools
P.O. Box 2319
Wrangell, AK 99929

Educational Adequacy Retreat Participants

Jerry Covey
2070 Courage Circle
Anchorage, AK 99507

Eddy Jeans, School Finance Manger
Department of Education & Early
Development
Educational Support Services
108 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, AK 99801-1894

Sara Jansen, Assembly Member
Mat-Su Borough
350 East Dahlia Avenue
Palmer, AK 99645

Jim Paul
P.O. Box 3014
Anderson, AK 99744

Deb Germano
P.O. Box 1511
Homer, AK 99603

Donna Peterson, Superintendent
Kenai Peninsula Borough School
148 N. Binkley Street
Soldotna, AK 99669

Les Daenzer, Director
Instructional Programs
Lower Kuskokwim Schools
P.O. Box 305
Bethel, AK 99559-0305

Janell R. Privett, Board President
Wrangell Public Schools
P.O. Box 2319
Wrangell, AK 99929

Carl Rose, Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards
316 W. 11th Street
Juneau, AK 99801-1510

Jeanne Bradner
NEA - Alaska
3037 South Circle
Anchorage, AK 99507

Paula Pawlowski, Board Member
3300 Balchen Drive
Anchorage, AK 99517

Julie Krafft
Alaska Municipal League
217 Second Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Carolyn Floyd, Mayor
City of Kodiak
P.O. Box 1397
Kodiak, AK 99615

Rosemary Hagevig
P.O. Box 240423
Douglas, AK 99824

Marie Wheeler, Finance Officer
Southwest School District
P.O. Box 90
Dillingham, AK 99576

Mike Fisher, Assistant Superintendent
Fairbanks North Star Borough SD
520 Fifth Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Dave Jones, Director of Finance
Kodiak Island Borough School District
722 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, AK 99615

Janet Stokesbary, Business Manager
Anchorage School District
P.O. Box 196614
Anchorage, AK 99519

EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY

Appendix A

Data Definitions

Quality Staff – Discussion and information related to years of experience including relevant training and appropriate licensure of teaching staff.

Curriculum – Discussion of course offerings.

Loss of Buying Power – The purchasing power of the dollar when adjusted for inflation.

Special Needs – Changes in school districts' revenues and expenditures for categorical programs such as special education, gifted and talented, bilingual/bicultural, and vocational education. New requirements within these program areas.

Facilities – Age and condition and cost to operate school facilities in a manner that is safe and compliant with state building codes.

Violence/Social Issues – Discussion of new requirements on districts.

Staffing – Average teacher salaries, turnover rates, pupil teacher ratios, and numbers of administrative staff.

EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY

Methodology

- I. Measurable standards for student achievement have been set by the State of Alaska to meet the higher expectations of the public. "Making the connection between school dollars and student achievement is the principal school finance challenge of the next century."¹

- II. To meet that challenge, we must identify and reflect on the changes that have occurred over the last 10 years.
 - A. The basic amount of school funding per student has not changed since 1993.
 - B. Inflation has eroded buying power.
 - C. New requirements have been added without the dollars to cover their costs.
 - D. Societal changes such as concerns for student safety and changing demographics have impacted schools.

APPENDIX A

¹ Source, *20/20 Vision, a Strategy for Doubling America's Achievement by the Year 2020*, The Consortium on Renewing Education, November 1998.

EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY

Definition

An adequate education shall provide all students opportunities to acquire the *knowledge and skills* necessary to prepare them to take a productive role in society.

The school finance system must provide sufficient revenues to assure all students meet or exceed Alaska performance standards in all areas.

These are the necessary components of an adequate education:

1. Students are exposed to locally adopted curricula that meet or exceed Alaska State Standards in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Geography, Government and Citizenship, History, Skills for a Healthy Life, Arts, World Languages, Technology, Employability and Library/Information Literacy.
2. Students are taught by qualified educators who are provided the time and support for professional development.
3. Students learn in a safe environment.
4. Facilities are well maintained.
5. Students have their diverse learning needs met.
6. There are effective partnerships between schools, families, and the community.
7. School buildings support appropriate technology for programs.
8. All students are given age-appropriate opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life including all student activities.

Data Needs

See Appendix A for data definitions.

- I.
 - A. Achievement information based on standards and related costs:
 - Quality Staff
 - Curriculum
- II. Information regarding the financial impact of:
 - A. Loss of Buying Power
 - B. Special Needs
 - C. Facilities
 - D. Violence/Social Issues
 - E. Staffing

EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY

Background

The passage of SB 36 carried with it certain reporting requirements for the Department of Education and Early Development to the Alaska State Legislature. A letter of intent was adopted by the legislature and approved by the Governor directing the department to include as one of the reports a review of *educational adequacy* in the schools of Alaska. It is recommended that the department use this document as framework in preparing the final educational adequacy report. The final report is due to the legislature by January 1, 2001.

In early August of 2000, Commissioner of Education & Early Development Richard S. Cross convened a broad-based group of Alaskans concerned with public education to address the issue of educational adequacy in Alaska. Participants included representatives from the Alaska Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), NEA-Alaska, Alaska Association of School Boards, Alaska Association of School Administrators, Alaska Association of School Business Officials, and Alaska Municipal League.

The group deliberated for two-and-one-half-days and reached agreement on the definition, data needs, and methodology to be used in measuring educational adequacy. Although the decisions of this group were reached independently, they are consistent with decisions of educational policy makers across the nation in terms of defining educational adequacy and identifying the conditions necessary to accomplish it. An important item to note is that, the group identified that the educational adequacy of the public school funding formula must be measured against the base student allocation set in Alaska Statute 14.17.470.

AS 14.17.470. Base student allocation. The base student allocation is \$3,940.

Educational Adequacy Retreat

August 2-4, 2000

Anchorage, Alaska

FINAL REPORT



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

School districts have held the line when negotiating contracts with staff and reduced administrative expenditures. Local municipalities have increased local contributions above the amounts required in law to support local schools. The department has implemented new laws and regulations that have improved school district reporting and accountability. The department has implemented the statewide assessment system to demonstrate how well children are learning, and to identify weaknesses with the current delivery model.

The burden of financing the educational system in Alaska has been shifting from the state to local governments over the last ten years. Inflation has eroded school districts' purchasing power for supplies, operational cost, and their ability to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the adequacy group's work and the department's analysis, the department recommends that changes be made to the public school funding formula to recoup losses due to inflation and to provide for future inflationary adjustments. These recommendations and others included in Tab 1 and 2 will be forwarded to the governor's education funding task force. The task force recommendations are due to the governor and the State Board of Education & Early Development on February 1, 2001.



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

approximately 7.4% or \$49 million dollars more to inflation proof the permanent fund than it will spend on the state's 133,300 children's K-12 education.

Facilities

In 1990, the average age of a school facility was 19 years and in 2000, the average is 26. With the increasing age of school facilities one would expect the annual operating and routine maintenance cost to increase. In FY1990, school districts were spending a statewide average of \$1,266 per student for facility operations and maintenance and in FY2000, only \$1,244 was spent.

In FY1998, the legislature passed a law requiring all school districts to have a preventative maintenance plan in place by July 1, 1999 in order to be eligible for state funding for school construction or major maintenance projects. The plan must include documented evidence of a maintenance management program, energy management, custodial care program, training program for staff and a renewal and replacement schedules for the electrical, mechanical, structural and other components of the facility. While the preventative maintenance plan is necessary to protect the state's interest in school construction projects, there was no new money provided to assist districts in meeting these new reporting requirements. School districts are forced to use existing resources to meet the new reporting requirements.

Conclusion

The Alaska state legislature has required increased accountability for the funds it appropriates for K-12 education before it considers increases to the foundation formula program. This report has identified many areas in which the department, school districts, and municipalities have responded.



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

Inflation

The foundation program statute does not have an inflationary adjustment for the base student allocation of \$3,940. To place an inflationary adjustment in Alaska Statute 14.17 would not bind future legislatures. The legislature would continue to have the power to determine the appropriate level of funding each fiscal year. The inflationary adjustment would amend the base student allocation that is used to calculate school district entitlements under the foundation funding formula.

The consumer price index for Anchorage has risen approximately 30% from 1990 to 1999. The January-to-January index rose 29.57% and the July-to-July index rose 30.7% in ten years. Between 1990 and 1999, the legislature has increased the base foundation funding formula approximately 5%. Many school districts have had to absorb the effects of the additional 25% of inflation. Many municipalities have increased the local contribution to offset the effects.

Increasing the base student allotment by the additional 25% inflation factor would result in an increase of \$985, or a revised student allotment of \$4,925. If the base student allotment were \$4,925, overall state foundation aid would increase by more than \$200 million.

The FY2002 foundation program budget request is \$665 million to educate an estimated 133,300 children statewide. In FY2001, Alaska spent \$664 million to inflation proof the permanent fund. It is estimated in FY2002 Alaska will spend \$714 million to inflation proof the permanent fund. In FY2002, Alaska will spend



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

two months. Districts report that they are scraping the bottom of the barrel, forced to hire unqualified teachers on emergency certificates, and teachers with minimal paper qualifications who are unsuitable for the positions.

The amount of state support through the foundation program impacts the level of wages, benefits, and incentives that school districts can offer to recruit and retain teachers. State support through the foundation program has remained relatively flat in current dollars for ten years, but when stated in constant dollars to reflect inflation it has actually decreased. Alaska school districts have had to hold the line when negotiating new salaries and benefits with its certified and non-certified staff.

As recently as 1989 Alaska was reported to have the highest average teacher salaries in the nation. According to the NEA, Alaska's average teacher salary in 1989 was \$42,818. In 1999, Alaska is reported to have slipped to number eight in the nation with an average teacher salary of \$48,085. The average teacher salary in Alaska has increased about 12.3% for the past ten-years, but when stated in constant dollars to reflect inflation it has decreased by approximately 11.7%.

As discussed in the foundation formula section of this report, the state foundation formula was increased approximately 5% in current dollars excluding increases for enrollment growth. This means the additional 7.3% increase in current dollars has come through additional local contributions and increased designated grants. Municipalities continue to increase local contributions and school districts continue to apply for and receive supplemental grants from other sources. These are more examples of municipalities and school districts being accountable to the state legislature by seeking and securing supplemental resources.



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

FY2002 budget will require \$10.5 million less than the FY2001 foundation formula budget due to increases in required local contribution and federal impact aid funds for a drop in state aid for education of approximately \$29.7 million for the two years. However, the legislature did approve a one-time appropriation in FY2001 of \$6.2 million for Learning Opportunity Grants.

Teachers

Recruitment of qualified and experienced teachers continues to become more difficult in Alaska as it is for much of the United States. Many states and outside school districts offer incentives as: signing bonus, down payment on a home, mortgage subsidy, and student loan repayment programs. (*See examples of teacher incentives offered in other states.*) These are examples of the recruiting techniques used beyond the annual salary to entice teachers to sign contracts. Due to limited resources, Alaska school districts continue to struggle to be competitive with other states and outside school districts when recruiting teachers.

From FY99 to FY2000 the average teacher salary in Alaska increased less than 1%. This reflects the smallest increase in average teacher salary in the nation from FY99 to FY2000. For the ten-year period from FY90 to FY2000, the average teacher salary stated in constant dollars decreased 11.7% and is the largest decrease in the nation for this time period. (*See National Education Association attachment.*)

Demand for teachers in Alaska has already exceeded supply, leaving unfilled positions across the state in math, special education, and speech pathology. For the 1999-2000 school year, 1,335 new teachers were hired in Alaska. On the first day of school 84 teaching positions were still unfilled, and some remained unfilled for up to



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

discontinued the tuition payments and started allocating the impact aid it received directly to the Anchorage School District. For the purpose of this comparison, the FY90 state tuition payments or approximately \$6.2 million was reclassified as federal impact aid funds. With this adjustment, federal impact aid accounted for approximately 3.5% of the school operating fund revenues for both FY90 and FY2000.

Impact aid aside, the major change in revenues occurred between the state foundation program and the local revenue support for education. In FY90, the municipal appropriation to schools in Anchorage was approximately \$62.2 million. In FY2000, the municipal appropriation to schools in Anchorage was approximately \$97.5 million, almost a 57% increase for the ten-year period. While state foundation aid in FY90 was approximately \$145.6 million and in FY2000 was \$198.6 million, an increase of almost 36%.

If the state were to match the local contribution effort of the Anchorage municipality, state foundation aid would have been almost \$228.6 million in FY2000. This would represent a \$30 million increase in state foundation aid to the Anchorage School District. To accommodate the \$30 million increase for Anchorage, the current base student allocation of \$3,940 would have to be increased by \$456 to \$4,396. The estimated total cost for increasing the base student allocation to \$4,396 statewide in FY2000 would have been approximately \$95.2 million.

In FY2001, the state foundation formula required \$19.2 million less in state support over the previous year. This decreased effort was due to three factors; declining enrollment, increased required local effort, and increased federal impact aid. The



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

FY2000. The number of students being served drives the Public School Funding Formula and the Federal Impact Aid Program. Because enrollment increased by 25% from FY90 to FY2000, both programs increased resource allocations by approximately the same percentages, excluding the 5% increase in the foundation formula base.

However, this is not true for local contributions to schools. The required local contribution to the schools is based strictly on the value of the property within the municipality and not the number of students being served. During this same ten-year period, required local effort increased from \$105 million to \$144 million. This represents an increase in required local effort of almost 37% or \$39 million. More importantly is how local municipalities responded with additional local contributions to schools from FY90 to FY2000. Actual local contributions to schools increased by 55% or \$98 million. Municipalities increased their contribution by \$59 million more than the formula required, in essence offsetting a portion of inflation while the state and federal governments were covering enrollment growth.

Municipalities have responded to the legislature's desire for accountability and participation by providing increased local contribution over the amount required by the foundation funding formula over the last ten years.

Another example of shifting the financial burden to municipalities is to look at the proportion of state aid to other revenues. The department looked at the school operating revenues for the Anchorage School District for FY90 and FY2000.

In FY90, the state applied for impact aid for the Anchorage military students then paid Anchorage state tuition for those students. Beginning in FY94, the state



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

Foundation Formula

The money distributed through the foundation funding formula provides Alaska school districts with the majority of the state's contribution to K-12 education. The funding formula allocates resources for general operations, routine maintenance, and operations of school facilities. General operations include: staff salaries and benefits, teaching supplies, textbooks, communications, contracted services, school, and district administrative services. Operations of school facilities include: custodial and maintenance staff salaries and benefits, utilities, and other expense associated with routine maintenance to operate school facilities.

The foundation program funding has increased from FY1990 to FY2000 mainly due to enrollment growth. From FY1990 to FY2000 enrollment increased 25%. The legislature has continued to fully fund enrollment increases during the 1990's. Each \$100 increase in the base student allocation set in Alaska Statute 14.17.470 requires approximately \$21 million in additional state support.

The foundation funding formula program base has been increased twice during this ten-year period. Once, in FY93 by 1.7% or approximately \$12 million, and again in FY99 by 3.3% or approximately \$21 million. The combined total of the two increases is 5% or approximately \$33 million in ten years. In FY90, basic need was about \$625 and FY2000 basic need was about \$816, an increase of almost 31%. This increase was due to the combination of the 25% increase in enrollment and the combined increased funding of 5% for FY93 and FY99.

Federal impact aid has also increased approximately 26% from FY90 to FY2000. Federal impact aid funds increased from \$73 million in FY90 to almost \$92 million in



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

operating fund on district administrative services. By FY2000, school districts were spending \$469 per student or 5.9% of the school operating fund on district administrative services. This represents a 2.6% reduction in school operating fund expenses on district administrative services.

In addition to the previous two requirements, SB 36 required the department to develop an assessment system to measure student performance. The tests are based on Alaska standards in reading, writing, and math and are given at grades 3, 6, 8, and the high school qualifying exam is administered for the first time to sophomores in high school. High school students are allowed to take the high school qualifying exam twice a year and for two additional years after they have completed other high school graduation requirements.

The results of the assessments given to students in grades 3, 6, and 8 will assist the department and school districts in identifying areas of weakness within the educational delivery system and develop action plans or strategies to assist students to improve performance.

School districts are utilizing the Quality Schools Grant funds, a component of the school funding formula, to develop intervention strategies and remedial programs. Currently, school districts are using these grant funds for activities such as focus programs for reading, writing, math, summer school, extended days, tutors, and additional staff.



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information provided by the Anchorage School District are attached to this report as appendixes.

Accountability

The Alaska legislature is requiring that the department and school districts be accountable for the funding it receives. In SB 36, the legislature added a requirement that districts spend 70% of their school operating funds on instructional services. In addition, the legislature directed the department to collect more uniform and detailed financial data from school districts. The department and school districts have responded to both of these directives.

The department has worked with school districts to develop a revised chart of accounts that clarifies code descriptions with new required codes to provide more accurate and detailed expenditure reporting. The State Board of Education & Early Development adopted the revised chart of accounts at its December 8, 2000 meeting. The new chart of accounts becomes effective July 1, 2001.

The department has also been working with school districts in meeting the 70% instructional requirement. Districts that cannot meet the new requirement may apply to the state board for a waiver. The waiver request must demonstrate that there are costs beyond the control of the school district as justification for their waiver.

In response to legislative concerns over how much school districts are spending on administrative expenses, districts have been reducing costs over the past ten years. In FY1990, school districts were spending \$618 per student or 8.5% of the school



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Although the decisions of this group were reached independently, they are consistent with decisions of educational policy makers across the nation in terms of defining educational adequacy and identifying the conditions necessary to accomplish it. An important item to note is that the group identified that the educational adequacy of the public school funding formula must be measured against the base student allocation set in Alaska Statute 14.17.470.

The department considered the suggested data needs identified in the report and has provided some general statewide statistics that demonstrate the changes that have occurred in education funding over the past ten years. (*See attached Bullet Sheet.*) The department also focused on changes to the Anchorage School District because Anchorage is considered the base by which all other school district adjustments in the foundation formula are measured from. Anchorage is considered the base because of its large and dense student population and because it is a main distribution center for many Alaska communities.

The Anchorage School District provided the department with statistics that illustrate the changes that have occurred over the past ten years on a per student basis. The information clearly demonstrates that the district has increased per-pupil expenses, but state aid has increased as well. The increase in state aid is due mainly to enrollment increases that have occurred in the past ten years. In addition to the statistics, the Anchorage School District provided information on the state and federal changes to the bilingual and special education programs. They provide an in-depth discussion of how those program costs have escalated over the past ten years. Copies of the reports from the educational adequacy retreat and the



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

The school finance system must provide sufficient revenues to assure all students meet or exceed Alaska performance standards in all areas.

These are the necessary components of an adequate education:

1. Students are exposed to locally adopted curricula that meet or exceed Alaska State Standards in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Geography, Government and Citizenship, History, Skills for a Healthy Life, Arts, World Languages, Technology, Employability and Library/Information Literacy.
2. Students are taught by qualified educators who are provided the time and support for professional development.
3. Students learn in a safe environment.
4. Facilities are well maintained.
5. Students have their diverse learning needs met.
6. There are effective partnerships between schools, families, and the community.
7. School buildings support appropriate technology for programs.
8. All students are given age-appropriate opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life including all student activities.



Public School Funding Formula *Educational Adequacy*

The passage of Senate Bill 36, Ch. 83, SLA 1998, included specific reporting requirements for the Department of Education & Early Development to the 22nd Alaska State Legislature by January 15, 2001. This report responds to the requirement to prepare a review of *educational adequacy* in the schools of Alaska.

There has been significant effort in implementing the new formula, developing regulations, and working with districts to improve the quality and comparability of financial data. The department has worked with school districts to meet the minimum expenditure on instruction requirement and to improve the school districts' uniform chart of accounts for collecting expenditure data.

The Department of Education & Early Development convened a broad-based group of Alaskans concerned with public education to address the issue of educational adequacy in Alaska. Participants included representatives from the Alaska Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), NEA-Alaska, Alaska Association of School Boards, Alaska Association of School Administrators, Alaska Association of School Business Officials, and Alaska Municipal League.

The group deliberated for two-and-one-half-days and reached agreement on the definition, data needs, and methodology to be used in measuring educational adequacy. The group defined educational adequacy as:

An adequate education shall provide all students opportunities to acquire the *knowledge and skills* necessary to prepare them to take a productive role in society.

**Alaska's Public School
Funding Formula:**

**A Report to the Alaska
State Legislature**



January 15, 2001

**Alaska's Public School
Funding Formula:**

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January 15, 2001

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Shirley J. Holloway, Ph.D.
Commissioner, Department of Education & Early Development



Public School Funding Formula

Executive Summary

The passage of Senate Bill 36, Ch. 83, SLA 1998, carried with it certain reporting requirements for the Department of Education & Early Development to the 22nd legislature by January 15, 2001. Following is a brief summary of each of the three required reports.

Tab 1 District Cost Factors

Background

This report addresses the requirement of: SB 36 section 41. TRANSITION: PROPOSED DISTRICT COST FACTORS. The Department of Education shall submit the initial proposed district cost factors, required under AS 14.17.460(b), enacted in sec. 2 of this Act, to the Alaska State Legislature by January 15, 2001.

Legislation requires the department to monitor district cost factors and submit a report to the legislature every other year beginning January 15, 2001. Cost factors are specific to each district and adjust funding to account for regional cost differences between districts. The lowest factor is 1.000 and the highest is 1.736.

Current district cost factors were adopted by the legislature and became effective July 1, 1998. These factors were based on the best data available at the time as provided by the McDowell 1998 Alaska Cost Study. To recalculate current district cost factors the department again utilized the 1998 McDowell Alaska School Operating Cost Study methodology.

Findings

The department utilized the 1998 McDowell Alaska Cost Study methodology to calculate updated district cost factors that created results that were not defensible or supported by underlying data. The department contracted with the McDowell group to verify the accuracy of the calculation.

The McDowell Group reviewed the department's calculations and found that the results were not meaningful. The McDowell Group determined that the 1998 methodology is not usable to update district cost factors for a number of reasons as outlined in their report included under Tab 1.

Recommendation

The department recommends that district cost factors remain at their current levels as designated in statute under AS 14.17.460 because there is not any empirical data to support changing the district cost factors at this time. The



Public School Funding Formula *Executive Summary*

department also recommends that a new district cost model be developed to properly account for cost differences between districts on an ongoing basis.

Tab 2 Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula

Background

This report addresses the requirement of: SB 36 Sec. 47. REQUIRED REPORT. The Department of Education shall compare the use of per school funding required under this Act to the use of funding communities required in AS 14.17 before the effective date of the Act and submit a report to the Alaska State Legislature by January 15, 2001.

This required report compares the per school funding under SB 36 to the previous funding formula. The old formula uses student enrollment grouped by community and the new formula uses enrollment grouped by school to determine basic need. This report compares adjustments between the old and new funding formulas such as size, special needs and supplemental funding floor.

The 1998 McDowell Alaska Cost Study review panel did not suggest that any school districts were over funded under the previous funding formula, rather that some districts appeared to be under funded under the new school funding model. The McDowell group report suggested that no district lose money. The legislature adopted as a component of SB36 the supplemental funding floor that erodes over time.

Findings

The supplemental funding floor is subject to erosion as school district enrollments increase. As district enrollments increase these additional students are only funded at 60% of entitlement. In the department's analysis of the district cost factors and comparing the old and new funding formula, there is no data to support the erosion of the supplemental funding floor that penalizes districts that have increased enrollment.

The previous funding formula had a hold harmless provision for school districts that experienced a substantial decrease in student enrollment from one year to the next. The current funding formula has no such provision and school districts immediately absorb the reduction in revenue due to decreased enrollment.



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Recommendations

The department recommends the repeal of AS 14.17.490(d), erosion of the supplemental funding floor.

The department recommends that AS 14.17 be amended to include a hold harmless provision for school districts that experience a decrease in student enrollment of 10% or more from one year to the next.

Tab 3 Educational Adequacy

Background

This report addresses the requirement of: SB 36 Letter of Intent. "It is the intent of the Legislature to direct the Department of Education to include in the required report of Section 47 a thorough review of educational adequacy in the schools of Alaska, paying particular attention to differences in costs of school operations between communities, differences in costs of school operations depending on their size, and the particular effects and impacts described in AS 14.17.490 section (d), and to report to the Legislature no later than January 15, 2001."

The department brought together a broad based group of Alaskan's to define educational adequacy and the underlying factors. The group focused primarily on the impact of inflation on education funding.

Based on direction from the adequacy group, the department examined the changes that have occurred in education funding over the past ten years and the impacts of those changes on school districts. The effects of inflation over the past ten years are identified in the report. The department found that a significant effect of inflation is that school districts are limited in their ability to recruit and retain teachers.

Findings

From FY90 to FY00 inflation has increased approximately 30% but the public school funding program was increased only 5% during this time.

From FY90 to FY00 enrollment increased 25% and the legislature fully funded the increase.



Public School Funding Formula *Executive Summary*

School districts in Alaska are having a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers due to the competitiveness of teacher salaries in other states and the vast number of incentives being afforded to new hires in other states.

Recommendations

Based on the adequacy group's work and the department's analysis, the department recommends that changes be made to the public school funding formula to recoup losses due to inflation and to provide for future inflationary adjustments. These recommendations and others included in Tab 1 and 2 will be forwarded to the governor's education funding task force. The task force recommendations are due to the governor and the State Board of Education & Early Development on February 1, 2001.

TAB 1

District Cost Factors



Public School Funding Formula *District Cost Factors*

Introduction

Alaska's public school funding formula includes a provision to adjust funding for each district for regional cost differences; this adjustment is contained within district cost factors that are in AS 14.17.460. Each district is assigned a factor by which funding is increased to compensate for cost differences.

This report responds to the direction in AS 14.17.460 (b) District cost factors, that the department shall monitor the cost factors established under (a) of this section and shall prepare and submit to the legislature by January 15 of every other fiscal year proposed district cost factors.

The current district cost factors in statute were arrived at as part of the 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study and adopted beginning fiscal year 1999. Previously, cost factors were last updated in 1988.

The department has reviewed the 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study in detail and compiled current data for analysis in the same manner as the study utilized. The department has calculated cost factors with current FY99 data based on the study's methodology and has reached conclusions and makes recommendations based on the outcome of our calculations and evaluation.



Public School Funding Formula *District Cost Factors*

The department has contracted with the authors of the 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study, The McDowell Group, to:

- Review, comment, and make recommendations to the department's current recalculation of district cost factors derived from using the Alaska School Operating Cost Study methodology.
- Review, comment, and make recommendations for any changes to current district cost factors.
- Review, comment, and make recommendations for any changes to the cost factor methodology.

The McDowell Group's report is included after this report.

Summary of the 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study Methodology and Calculations

The 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study presents the calculation for determining cost factors on page 18 of that report. The district cost factors are calculated by dividing each district's estimated average basic need per student by the statewide estimated average basic need per student. Basic need is the amount of required funding the foundation formula assigns to each district.

The 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study was able to use basic need in calculating cost factors because basic need revenues are essentially what a district has available to spend, therefore basic need approximates expenditures.



Public School Funding Formula *District Cost Factors*

The 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study investigated the issue of basic need and cost factors in two pieces, the instructional component and the district level component (non-personal services and administration).

The development of the instructional component of basic need and cost factors used a team of education experts and statistical modeling to develop a school size table that is in AS 14.17.450. The school size table was developed to account for instructional operating costs that are influenced by school size. The instructional portion of a district's basic need is dependent on the multipliers in the table as applied to each school in the district.

The study's review of the district expenditures used an analysis of 1996 audited expenditure reports from all 53 school districts. The study pursues a rigorous examination of district level expenditures. The study examined district level costs by measuring each district's expenditures per student and also repeats the analysis by examining a "market basket," or subset, of expenditures per student. The market basket of expenditures included travel, supplies, utilities, insurance, and communication expenditures. The report concludes that no consistent standard could be applied for computing a relationship between student enrollment and district level costs, and that the short run solution is to compensate districts based on their actual costs. Therefore, the final methodology resorted to using basic need in the calculation for cost factors rather than expenditure data.

The estimated basic need used in the study to determine cost factors was arrived at by adjusting each district's original basic need by changes developed in the school table. Because a conclusion relating to district costs was not achieved, no changes



Public School Funding Formula *District Cost Factors*

were suggested for these non-personal services and administrative costs. The cost factors in AS 14.17.460 represent each district's estimated average basic need per student divided by the statewide estimated average basic need per student.

Results of using FY99 Data to Calculate District Cost Factors following the McDowell 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study

For the current period, actual FY99 student data and actual basic need dollars were used to recalculate cost factors as presented on page 18 of the 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study.

Because the instructional portion of basic need is set in statute with the school size table and because there is not a mechanism to adjust basic need for district costs, one would not expect districts' basic need dollars to significantly change from one year to the next unless there was a drastic change in a district's school size configuration. Correspondingly, if basic need remains stable, than the cost factors derived from dividing each district's basic need per student by the statewide basic need per student would not be expected to change.

The results obtained from recalculating cost factors using FY99 data are presented in appendix A. The results do not provide a basis, or insight, to recommend changes to existing cost factors. The results do however point to several areas of concern in the current cost factor methodology.

The current cost study methodology does not account for the changes that SB 36 made to the foundation formula for calculating correspondence study dollars or special education intensive dollars. The results of using FY99 data with the cost



Public School Funding Formula *District Cost Factors*

study methodology shows that those schools with correspondence students have an elevated cost factor. For example, Galena's cost factor is set in statute at 1.348 but using the cost study methodology with FY99 correspondence dollars assigns Galena a cost factor of 6.631. The increases the methodology calculates for districts with correspondence students are not warranted by increased costs. Additionally, because the formula simply divides each district's average basic need per student by the statewide average basic need per student, the impacts affecting districts with correspondence studies are also carried into the statewide average.

By using a calculation based on adjusted average daily attendance and average basic need to calculate cost factors any imperfections in the adjustment to average daily attendance or in the determination of basic need, are incorporated into district cost factors. Further, without identifying the underlying elements of true cost differences there is not a process to evaluate outcomes.

Conclusion

The 1998 Alaska School Operating Cost Study reported that compensating districts for actual district costs incurred was an unsatisfactory long-term solution. Based on our review of the methodology, and the outcome of calculations using FY99 data, we agree with the study's conclusion that the current methodology is unsatisfactory.

We recommend that a request-for-proposal be developed that requires identification of the underlying elements affecting school costs and determines a methodology for measuring those underlying elements. This will improve our cost factor methodology from that of compensating districts for current basic need to an improved method of allocating funding based on differences in applicable costs.



Public School Funding Formula *District Cost Factors*

Consideration should be given to the elements that contribute to costs in school districts. The investigation should evaluate whether the previously studied elements of travel, supplies, utilities, insurance, and communication correctly identify cost elements in districts, or whether other items should be added, or if different factors driving school district costs are applicable. Once the underlying elements are identified, a measurement tool applicable to each element should be identified.

The results obtained from recalculating cost factors using FY99 data under the 1998 cost study methodology do not provide a basis to recommend changes to existing cost factors because the formula does not adequately evaluate for cost differences in district level costs and the methodology does not adequately account for changes in the foundation formula after SB 36.

Recommendation

The department recommends that district cost factors remain at their current levels as designated in statute under AS 14.17.460 because there is not any empirical data to support changing the district cost factors at this time. The department also recommends that a new district cost model be developed to properly account for cost differences between districts on an ongoing basis.

FY99 Computation of District Cost Factors

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
School District	FY99 Instructional Level Expenditures	FY99 District Level Expenditures	FY99 School Level Expenditures	FY99 District Level Expenditures	Impact of School Level Revisions	Weighted Impact of School & District Level Revisions	Current (FY 99) Basic Need	Revised Basic Need	Current (FY 99) Basic Need Per Student	Unadjusted Multiplier	District Cost Factor
Total	622,823,619	338,506,511	65%	35%			813,867,788		5,516		
Alaska Gateway	2,997,683	2,048,003	59%	41%			4,977,441		6,468	1.173	1.296
Aleutian Region	492,197	546,358	47%	53%			975,111		8,208	1.488	1.644
Aleutians East	2,302,187	2,676,885	46%	54%			3,670,346		6,728	1.220	1.348
Anchorage	209,452,072	76,372,647	73%	27%			2,825,043		4,991	0.905	1.000
Annette Island	2,489,601	1,724,851	59%	41%			2,448,946		4,939	0.895	1.000
Bering Strait	11,706,858	12,267,042	49%	51%			20,512,192		7,266	1.317	1.455
Bristol Bay	1,632,441	1,265,562	56%	44%			2,751,026		6,098	1.105	1.221
Chatham	1,664,365	1,316,342	56%	44%			2,688,735		5,497	0.996	1.101
Chugach	839,298	859,828	49%	51%			1,234,166		7,866	1.426	1.576
Copper River	3,050,705	2,516,105	55%	45%			5,624,665		6,186	1.121	1.239
Cordova	2,459,543	1,757,664	58%	42%			3,372,679		5,274	0.956	1.056
Craig	1,837,411	1,260,688	59%	41%			2,866,823		4,986	0.904	1.000
Delta Greely	3,930,540	3,063,337	56%	44%			6,603,913		6,323	1.146	1.266
Denali	2,077,774	1,803,864	54%	46%			3,510,658		6,243	1.132	1.251
Dillingham	3,531,431	1,966,385	64%	36%			4,204,216		6,042	1.095	1.210
Fairbanks	72,876,411	32,879,603	69%	31%			88,576,188		5,214	0.945	1.044
Galena	3,720,080	9,516,538	28%	72%			11,747,583		33,105	6.001	6.631
Haines	2,121,521	1,347,464	61%	39%			2,873,678		4,949	0.897	1.000
Hoonah	1,634,172	1,444,138	53%	47%			1,855,937		5,327	0.966	1.067
Hvdaburg	419,259	568,515	42%	58%			978,223		5,235	0.949	1.049
Iditarod	2,976,552	4,075,269	42%	58%			5,240,176		7,825	1.419	1.568
Juneau	26,149,536	9,738,260	73%	27%			30,632,003		5,021	0.910	1.006
Kake	917,143	1,133,529	45%	55%			1,450,472		4,982	0.903	1.000
Kashunamiut	1,409,301	1,533,516	48%	52%			2,751,775		6,811	1.235	1.365
Kenai	48,259,961	24,656,506	66%	34%			59,675,398		4,859	0.881	1.000
Ketchikan	11,276,914	6,223,865	64%	36%			14,774,370		4,887	0.886	1.000
Klawock	1,269,410	931,150	58%	42%			1,537,191		5,055	0.916	1.012
Kodiak	14,370,291	8,486,571	63%	37%			17,811,243		5,325	0.965	1.066
Kuspuk	3,523,450	3,125,405	53%	47%			5,531,642		6,878	1.247	1.378
Lake & Peninsula	4,087,174	4,169,360	50%	50%			7,378,871		7,369	1.336	1.476
Lower Kuskokwim	25,163,924	18,855,045	57%	43%			36,670,132		7,138	1.294	1.430
Lower Yukon	11,255,759	8,504,546	57%	43%			19,427,864		6,840	1.240	1.370
Matanuska	61,906,788	22,150,470	74%	26%			70,235,033		5,158	0.935	1.033
Nenana	1,094,922	1,525,356	42%	58%			2,220,939		9,389	1.702	1.801
Nome	4,025,758	2,726,728	60%	40%			5,734,040		6,258	1.134	1.253
North Slope	20,020,075	19,098,608	51%	49%			19,700,591		7,132	1.293	1.429
Northwest Arctic	12,323,886	11,813,417	51%	49%			21,898,559		7,381	1.338	1.478
Pelican	276,916	348,793	44%	56%			338,328		6,099	1.106	1.222
Petersburg	3,176,667	1,957,271	62%	38%			4,708,300		4,850	0.879	1.000
Pribilof	885,092	1,236,683	42%	58%			1,816,576		6,783	1.230	1.359
Sitka	8,038,682	3,207,312	71%	29%			9,500,317		4,958	0.899	1.000
Skagway	668,697	754,929	47%	53%			1,135,902		5,465	0.991	1.095
Southeast Island	1,794,504	1,632,270	52%	48%			2,933,015		5,440	0.986	1.090
Southwest Region	5,764,965	4,143,933	58%	42%			8,643,414		6,774	1.228	1.357
St. Mary's	688,727	703,215	49%	51%			1,355,439		6,388	1.158	1.280
Tanana	540,615	1,235,715	30%	70%			1,230,895		7,128	1.292	1.428
Unalaska	2,063,788	1,720,125	55%	45%			2,924,426		5,926	1.074	1.187
Valdez	4,907,866	3,000,547	62%	38%			5,608,590		5,289	0.959	1.060
Wrangell	2,325,866	1,426,328	62%	38%			3,264,842		4,815	0.873	1.000
Yakatut	1,025,300	916,127	53%	47%			1,345,234		5,095	0.924	1.021
Yukon Flats	2,959,179	3,362,200	47%	53%			5,077,399		7,941	1.440	1.591
Yukon Koyukuk	4,125,363	3,898,453	51%	49%			6,917,970		7,225	1.310	1.448
Yupit	2,314,999	3,013,190	43%	57%			4,673,273		7,095	1.286	1.421

Notes to columns:

- Columns (1) and (2) are from 1999 school district audited financial statements
- Column (1), The term "Instructional Level Costs," includes aggregated costs for instructional personnel. This is also referred to as "School Level Costs," in the McDowell report.
- Columns (5), (6), and (8) are represented on the spreadsheet to show comparison to the 1998 study calculation, but these are not used in FY99 because there were no changes in school or district level components contained in the instructional size table after the 1998 study changes, therefore actual basic need is used for FY99.
- Column (7) current basic need is taken from the FY99 foundation calculation
- Column (9) per student basic need is determined by dividing column (7) by the size-adjusted student count in each district.

ALASKA SCHOOL OPERATING COST STUDY

REVIEW OF CALCULATED COST FACTORS

PREPARED FOR:
**Alaska Department of Education
and Early Development**
801 WEST 10TH STREET
JUNEAU ALASKA, 99801

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PREPARED BY:



Juneau • Anchorage

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Executive Summary

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development retained the McDowell Group to review the 1999 updates to the District Cost Factors. We have examined the new calculations, the underlying database and assumptions, and have discussed changes in the education environment with Department representatives.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. The methodology used to adjust Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the impact of school size is sound and amenable to update. This methodology is based on an empirical analysis of school level (instructional) costs. The Department should use recalculated ADM's using the most recent census in their revised calculation of Basic Need.
2. The methodology used to calculate District Cost Factors (DCF's) is not amenable to update for a number of reasons discussed in this report. We find the re-calculated results to not be meaningful. We recommend that the Department use the 1998 factors for the revised calculation of Basic Need.
3. We reiterate our recommendation in the 1998 *Alaska School Operating Cost Study* that further study is required for the district level costs. On the other hand, the standards for school level costs remain valid today. Readers are reminded that the District Cost Factor is a single number resulting from the blending in two costs – school level (instructional) costs and district level (administration and non-personal services) costs. The methodology selected in that report to allocate district level costs was simply a first step in transitioning the State of Alaska toward using an empirical basis for identifying actual school cost. Because school districts have greater discretion in controlling non-personnel and administrative costs, a methodology that develops standards or goals and directs funding in accordance with achieving the standards/goals may be a preferable option.

Statement of the Situation

In early 1998, the McDowell Group prepared the *Alaska School Operating Cost Study* for the State of Alaska Legislative Budget and Audit Committee. The purpose of the study was to determine adjustment factors that compensate for the impact of school size and geographical location on school operating costs. These factors were incorporated into the Public School Funding Formula.

It is important to stress that this study dealt with only one piece – operating costs – of a large and complex puzzle termed the School Foundation Formula. It was not intended to determine the cost of basic educational (Basic Need), but only how to allocate a portion of Basic Need (i.e., certain school operating costs) as defined by legislative appropriation. Also, Basic Need is only a starting point for public school funding; many adjustments are made for local contributions, federal impact aid, special needs, and other factors. Since the report was published, additional legislation has been enacted which has “adjusted” the District Cost Factors; all of these adjustments have been determined outside of the study analysis.

In our report, we cautioned the Committee that this was an important step, but only a first step in the process of transforming the funding process into one that has a scientific and empirical basis. Previous to 1998, District Cost Factors were based primarily on outdated (1985) household market basket costs unrelated to the cost of operating schools. A major advance of the Alaska School Operating Cost Study was, for the first time since statehood, to base District Cost Factors on what it cost to actually operate schools. The priority focus of the study effort was placed on the most significant part of operating costs, namely school level or instructional costs accounting for at least 70% of the total. The second major advance was to base school level (instructional) costs on standards for staffing schools of various sizes. The result was a sound defensible means of allocating instructional costs consistent from district to district that allows for updating based on changes in ADM.

However, such a standard was not possible for district level costs and the solution was an imperfect one that now prevents updating of the district level cost component of the DCF. Instead of a uniform standard like that calculated for school size, districts were simply allocated district level costs based on each district's actual expenditures per student in FY 1996, the most recent year available at the time of the study. As a result of this acknowledge shortcoming, we recommended that the Committee implement a transition period to evaluate if adjustments are needed, and put further work into understanding the non-personnel and administrative costs, research that eventually could lead to standards for district level costs.

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development is now in the process of recalculating the cost factors using 1999 data. Several issues and concerns about the District Cost Factors have emerged in this work. The McDowell Group views this situation as an excellent opportunity to review the assumptions, strengths and limitations of our earlier study.

Review of District Level Cost Factors

To accomplish this review, the McDowell Group examined the worksheets used to recalculate the District Cost Factors (DCF's), as well as the underlying data used in the calculation. We noted that several adjustments needed to be made to audited financial statement information, consistent with the 1998 study. We also examined the additional data manipulation required to account for the increased roles of correspondence study and accounting transfers.

The purpose of DCF's is to account for wide variations in district level costs depending on geographic location. For example, remote districts with several small schools may pay eight times as much per student for heating oils as does a large urban district, even though the shelf price for oil is only two times as high. Non-personal services and administrative costs were combined into the district level cost pool for simplification, although it is clear that these costs have unique cost drivers. The use of actual expenditures had the effect of taking into account all of each district's unique geographic variables such as climate, insulation of buildings, utility and fuel costs, and so forth, including each district's local policies that affect spending. The disadvantage of this method is the absence of standards that resulted in compensation of districts for their current financial management practices – whatever they may be.

The McDowell Group report found that data limitations precluded the determination of a consistent standard for these costs across school districts. Therefore, a simple methodology of comparing actual per-student spending on non-personnel and administrative costs by each school district to the State average was employed. This methodology is far less rigorous than that used to account for variations in school level cost, but it was considered reasonable insofar as district level costs are comparatively small. However, district level costs are often most significant in smaller, multi-site rural districts where a larger portion of the total budget must be allocated to non-personal services out of necessity. As a result, the 70/30 rule (that was neither a part of the 1998 study nor a recommendation of it), forces many districts to skimp on necessary non-personal services costs or seek an exemption. While the intent of the rule is commendable - to address administrative costs and to encourage maximizing the money spent on instruction its effects are impractical for many smaller districts.

The 1998 *Alaska School Operating Cost Study* presents the computation of DCF's in Table VII on page 18 of the report. In response to a request by the Legislative Budget & Audit Committee, a single adjustment factor was calculated blending two components – school level costs and district level costs. DCF's are therefore calculated by dividing each district's estimated Basic Need per student by the statewide estimated Basic Need per student (Basic Need was used as these revenues are a good proxy for district expenditures).

This methodology is simple and represents a reasonable first step in accounting for district cost differences. It also, unfortunately, contains several features that make their continued use problematic:

- The methodology's basis accepts 1996 expenditure patterns as reflective of a district's needs and drives future spending to approximate and/or exceed this baseline. This basis was largely driven by the state of the database at the time the study was conducted. Financial statement expenditure data was considered to have the greatest accuracy, although several adjustments were made to the audited numbers for several districts in an attempt to level the comparison.

The net result is to accept that the 1996 expenditures for each district are reflective of their need, rather than alternative methods of independently assessing the need or developing a standard for cost. This is a reasonable method for a "point in time" analysis but is clearly less preferable to the other two alternatives in future years.

Assuming that districts essentially spend what they receive, this methodology reinforces itself, that is, it drives the district to the same level of spending each year. The lack of a standard means that districts that were relatively underfunded prior to 1998 continue to be hampered in their district level cost allocation. For districts with ample funding, there is little incentive to economize. Further, extraordinary events, such as unexpectedly high fuel costs, can have a devastating effect on districts with tight budgets. In fact, the major incentive, if this methodology remains in place, is for the districts to increase spending levels resulting in a higher average versus the state average. This is a driver the state may wish to avoid.

- Some factors have increased in significance in school operational and accounting practices that were not considered by the 1998 study. Correspondence study has increased markedly at some school districts. This effect was not analyzed in the 1998 report and will skew results when included in the recalculation of cost factors.

For the present cost factor re-calculation, the Department has to contend with the increased practice of transfers. Again, this practice was not considered in the 1998 report and results may be skewed when factored into the recalculation.

Financial statements serve a number of purposes, but are not designed as cost research tools. While some accounts may be useful for comparisons, we are of the opinion that the analysis of cost drivers for district level costs may not be adequately served by financial statement data alone.

- Recalculation using Fiscal Year 1999 data illustrates that the underlying methodology is an inappropriate driver and/or does not hold up to accounting/operational changes. Trial runs to re-calculate cost factors show two main effects. The first is that the large majority of district cost factors are unchanged (as predicted). The second is that a small number of districts have very large changes, primarily due to the operational or accounting changed that were not analyzed in the 1998 report. It is our recommendation that these changes to the DCF's should not be implemented without further study.

- Improvements to financial and operational data initiated by the Alaska Department of Education cannot be incorporated into the current calculation. The Department of Education has undertaken initiatives to ensure financial statement standardization and improve the quality of enrollment data using the Oasis database. These advances set the stage for better school cost data that can support more detailed cost study. Hence, a data quality limitation that existed at the time of the 1998 study has been removed. The improvement in data means that a new method for calculating administrative and non-personal services cost factors can be considered. Again, a new method should consider standards and the goals of the State of Alaska that underlie Alaska's huge fiscal commitment to education.
- Variations in district level costs are diluted by school level costs in this calculation. For the sake of "simplicity," two distinct cost pools - non-personnel and administrative costs - were combined and then further blended with instructional costs. What results is a very large - and complex - cost pool. It is entirely possible that the portfolio effect has damped critical variations, punishing some districts with higher than average costs and thereby rewarding others.
- Waiver requests to the 70/30 instructional/non-instructional regulations have increased each year and are an indication that review of this methodology is required. As previously mentioned the 70/30 regulation was not part of the study and would not have been recommended by the study team if our opinion had been sought. It is our understanding that the original intent was to encourage districts to minimize administrative costs and allocate more money to instruction. This is certainly a commendable goal. However, most district level costs are non-personal services costs that provide the basic infrastructure of education, such as books, building utility, fuel and maintenance costs, insurance and the like. Smaller districts with inefficient buildings, severe climates and other factors out of their control are the most likely to have district level costs in excess of 30%, some in excess of 40%.

Recommendations for Further Work

The 1998 McDowell Study put significant analysis into school level (instructional) costs, which comprise the major percentage of school operating costs. This analysis produced a methodology that can be updated yearly with the assurance of providing meaningful allocations.

As stated in the 1998 report, the State of Alaska should continue to improve its Public School Funding Formula and engage a similar quantitative effort into district level costs. Though the magnitude of these costs is well below instructional costs, they comprise a value that is certainly significant and can impact many districts, especially those on the margin of adequate funding. Data collection and standardization has apparently improved to the point that such a study will produce meaningful results.

Updating the District Cost Factors using the current methodology with 1999 data will result in more questions than answers. We recommend that the current DCF's be maintained and the Department's efforts be placed in re-examining the methodology.

There are two primary approaches to an analysis of district level costs. The first is a study similar to the one in 1998 that seeks to understand the reasons for why these costs vary by school size and location. For these types of indirect costs, a typical study would be to determine major cost pools and identify unique drivers for the pools. A private industry approach to understanding indirect costs is to develop cost pools based on distinct activities, hence the name activity-based costing (or ABC). The ABC approach has become quite popular in the public sector as well, as it can lead to the creation of standards that can be used to monitor and control indirect costs.

The second approach is a rate-setting approach. Indirect cost would be examined to the extent that expenditure goals could be developed. A funding methodology could then be devised to provide incentives to school districts for achieving these goals. This approach requires a more clearly defined public policy component than the activity-based approach.

In closing, the McDowell Group offers a two-step recommendation. The first is to assemble a preliminary study team comprised of Alaska education experts with a mix of rural and urban school district operations experience. This study team would determine and examine critical issues and develop project objectives. The second step is to design an on-going cost research program that specifies data that will properly account for regional and school size differences in district level and administrative costs.

TAB 2

**Comparison of Old to New
Funding Formula**



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

Introduction

The passage of Senate Bill 36, Ch. 83, SLA 1998, carried with it certain reporting requirements for the Department of Education & Early Development to the 22nd Alaska State Legislature by January 15, 2001. This report responds to the requirement under Section 47 that the department review *Funding Communities* versus *School* adjustments in the public school funding formula. In addition, a letter of intent adopted by the legislature provided further direction to the department in completing the required reports. This report will highlight key components and adjustments within Alaska's public school funding formula and illustrate the application of these components and adjustments from the previous funding *community* based formula to the current *school* based funding formula.

For the past 20 years, Alaska's public school funding formula has historically contained four major adjustments to the formula. These same adjustments can be found in most public school funding formulas in the nation. These adjustments include:

1. sparseness and size of student population;
2. special needs or categorical funding;
3. regional cost differences;
4. equalization; and
5. supplemental funding floor.



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

Fiscal year 1999 was the first year of implementation of Senate Bill 36 and distribution of public school funding based on the new school based funding formula. Table 1 provides a comparison of the prior community based funding formula and the current school based funding formula using the same fiscal year 1999 data set. This comparison required the conversion from instructional units under the old community formula to per student units under the newly adopted school formula. Fiscal year 1999 is the only year school district state aid was calculated using the old and new formula. This comparison was required for the first year of implementation to determine the supplemental funding floor for the school districts that needed additional funding to help transition to the new formula.

The department has analyzed each of these adjustments and compared their use with the prior funding community formula and under the new school funding formula.

Sparseness and size of student population

Senate Bill 36 changed the method that the State of Alaska used to determine adjustments for sparseness and size of student population. The previous funding formula utilized a concept known as *funding communities*. The average daily membership of schools within a school district were grouped into funding communities and a formula was applied to determine the number of instructional units for the purpose of calculating each school district's basic need.

The McDowell Group assembled a panel of Alaskans with many years of experience in the field of education to review and make recommendations to improve the



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

adjustment mechanism in the public school funding formula. The group reviewed the funding community concept and its application under the instructional unit funding formula. The group determined that although the definition of funding communities was not being applied consistently across school districts, that even a consistent application would not result in an equitable distribution system of resources. The group determined that the school, not the community, is the fundamental cost center for delivering instructional services. The panel determined that adopting the school as the basis for funding would result in a more equitable allocation of instructional resources by providing comparable levels of instructional staffing in all schools regardless of district size and location. The group determined that schools of similar size should receive similar resources for staffing regardless of location.

Table 2 shows the change in the distribution of resources from the *funding community* concept model to the *school* model that was adopted by the legislature under Senate Bill 36. This comparison does not include other adjustments due to changes in district cost factor or special needs funding. As shown in Table 1, the range of change is an increase of 15.8% for the Alyeska Central School to -36.8% for the Aleutian Region School District by the elimination of the funding community concept and basing the allocations on the number of students at each school. The school district with the largest increase was Petersburg at 11.2%.

It should be noted that the McDowell Group review panel did not suggest that any school districts were over funded under the previous funding community model rather some districts appeared to be under funded under the school funding model. Table 3 shows the change in dollars per student under the new formula as compared



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

to the old formula. This table shows that under the old formula for the first 10 to 20 students, the allocation remains the same at \$12,200 per student. This flat level of funding for the first group of 20 students was to provide funding for fixed cost associated with operating a school facility. The change in funding on a per student basis gradually decreases after the first 20 students to accommodate for economies of scale, while the new formula provides a larger allocation initially for the first 10 students, it decreases to below \$8,000 per student by the time you reach 20 students. Table 4 demonstrates the reduction in resources being allocated to small schools serving less than 100 students.

Another issue that contributes to the change in funding is the number of items that receive adjustment. For example in FY 99, using the funding community model there were 267 funding communities that received the adjustment for size while with the per school model there were 499 adjustments for size. Of the 499 adjustments for schools there were 143 schools serving less than 100 students. Table 5 shows the number of funding communities compared to the number of schools by district and the number of schools serving less than 100 students by school district.

The funding community formula had a hold harmless provision for school districts that experienced a 10% drop in K-12 instructional units from one year to the next. The year before the school district experienced a decrease in K-12 instructional units by 10% or more became the base year. In addition to its current K-12 instructional units a school district was awarded in the first year of decline, 75% of the difference from the base year, in the second year 50% of the difference between the current year and the base year, and in the third year 25% of the difference between the current year and the base year.



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

Special needs or categorical funding

Categorical funding for special education, gifted and talented education, vocational education and bilingual/bicultural educational programs changed from the funding community model to the school funding model. The funding community model provided resource allocations to school districts based on the numbers of students and the types of special need services provided to each student. The program adjustments were based on the average cost of providing various levels of service within each of the program areas. For example, special education provided four adjustments ranging from \$1,525 for each student identified as gifted and talented to \$20,300 for each student identified as requiring special education intensive services. Bilingual/bicultural educational programs had three levels of adjustments for the various types of services that students were identified as needing and vocational education had one adjustment for each student identified as enrolled in a vocational program course.

With the passage of Senate Bill 36, and the implementation of the school based funding formula, the legislature approved a block funding approach for allocating resources for special need programs. The school funding model provides an increased adjustment of 20% to the districts' average daily membership after it has been adjusted for school size and district cost factor. The 20% increase is intended to allocate resources for special education, gifted and talented education, vocational education and bilingual/bicultural educational programs. This change has resulted in an increased allocation for categorical programs of approximately \$13 million dollars under the school funding model over the funding community model. It is important to understand that although there are additional resources allocated for



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

special needs programs under both funding models, school districts are not required to expend these funds on special needs programs. In other words, the funds are discretionary and local school boards have the responsibility to determine the appropriate expenditures for these funds.

Regional cost differences

Senate Bill 36 continues to provide an adjustment for regional cost differences. The McDowell Group report defined these costs as "District Cost Factors." The District Cost Factors differ from the previous Area Cost Differentials in how they were derived. There is also a slight change in the way they are applied in the two funding formulas. The previous Area Cost Differentials were applied to all instructional units which included the K-12 and categorical units. The current District Cost Factors are applied to the student counts at the point they have been adjusted for school size and carry through to the 20% special needs adjustment. The District Cost Factors are not applied to the adjustments for students requiring intensive services or correspondence program counts.

The previous Area Cost Differentials were calculated using a market basket approach measuring the differences in items such as fuel and utilities between districts. The current District Cost Factors were calculated using school district audited financial data and reflect the per student district operating cost, compared to per student statewide operating costs, as well as other adjustments. The District Cost Factors represent the cost of goods, numbers of students, dispersion of schools, cost of travel, and other factors that affect district operational costs. Because the



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

District Cost Factors reflect factors other than the price of goods, neighboring districts will not necessarily have similar cost factors.

Senate Bill 36 requires the department to review the District Cost Factors and recommend changes to the legislature every other year beginning January 2001. The department intends to employ the McDowell Group methodology in order to update the current District Cost Factors. The first report on the District Cost Factors and the results of the department's review are presented to the legislature under a separate report.

Equalization

The funding community and the school models both make adjustments for instructional units or average daily membership then apply dollars to the base to arrive at Basic Need. Basic Need is the starting point of the equalization formula and provides all districts with needed resources based on the various formula adjustments. Funding components of Basic Need include required local effort, federal impact aid, and state aid. These three components determine the shares of local, federal, and state resources that make up Basic Need.

The State of Alaska must meet a federal equalization test known as the "disparity test" in order to consider federal impact aid dollars in the public school funding formula. The disparity test measures the amount of revenue per student among the 53 school districts. The federal law limits the per student wealth between districts to 25%. The wealthiest district in the state is not allowed to have more than a 25% increased per pupil revenue over the poorest district in the state. The state



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

maintains this standard by placing a cap on local contributions that exceed the required local effort. The state imposed cap on excess local contributions is equal to 23% of the districts' basic need. Again, all districts are considered equal at basic need so by placing a cap on excess local revenues equal to 23% of the districts' basic need, the state will continue to meet the federal equalization standard of 25%.

Supplemental funding floor

The supplemental funding floor is a mechanism to assist school districts in the transition from the funding community based formula to the school formula. In the first year of the new formula, districts that qualified for more state aid under the funding community formula than they did under the new school formula were allocated transition funding called the "Supplemental Funding Floor."

For example, under the funding community formula a district may have qualified for \$10,000 per student but under the new school formula calculation, will qualify for \$9,000 per student. Using the supplemental funding floor, under the school formula the district was allocated \$9,000 per student plus an addition \$1,000 per student as a supplemental funding floor to ease the transition to the new funding level. As the school districts' student population changes, the \$1,000 per student of supplemental funding floor will erode. The erosion of the supplemental funding floor will eventually bring the school districts' per student allocation down to a total of \$9,000 per student as determined by the new school funding formula.

This transitional provision differs substantially from other transitional or hold harmless clauses previously used when the funding formula was modified.



Public School Funding Formula *Comparison of Old to New Funding Formula*

Previous transition language required a school district to adjust to its new funding level in a three-year period. The supplemental funding floor only erodes due to changes in the district student population providing a much more gradual change to the new funding level.

School districts qualified for a total of \$17.4 million dollars in supplemental funding floor in fiscal year 1999. As the supplemental funding floor erodes, the money is lost from the funding formula. This means the public school funding formula will have \$17.4 million less in state support once the supplemental funding floor is completely eroded.

Recommendations

The department recommends the repeal of AS 14.17.490(d), erosion of the supplemental funding floor.

The department recommends that AS 14.17 be amended to include a hold harmless provision for school districts that experience a decrease in student enrollment of 10% or more from one year to the next.

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
 Public School Funding Formula
 Funding Community versus Per School Funding FY 99

Table 1

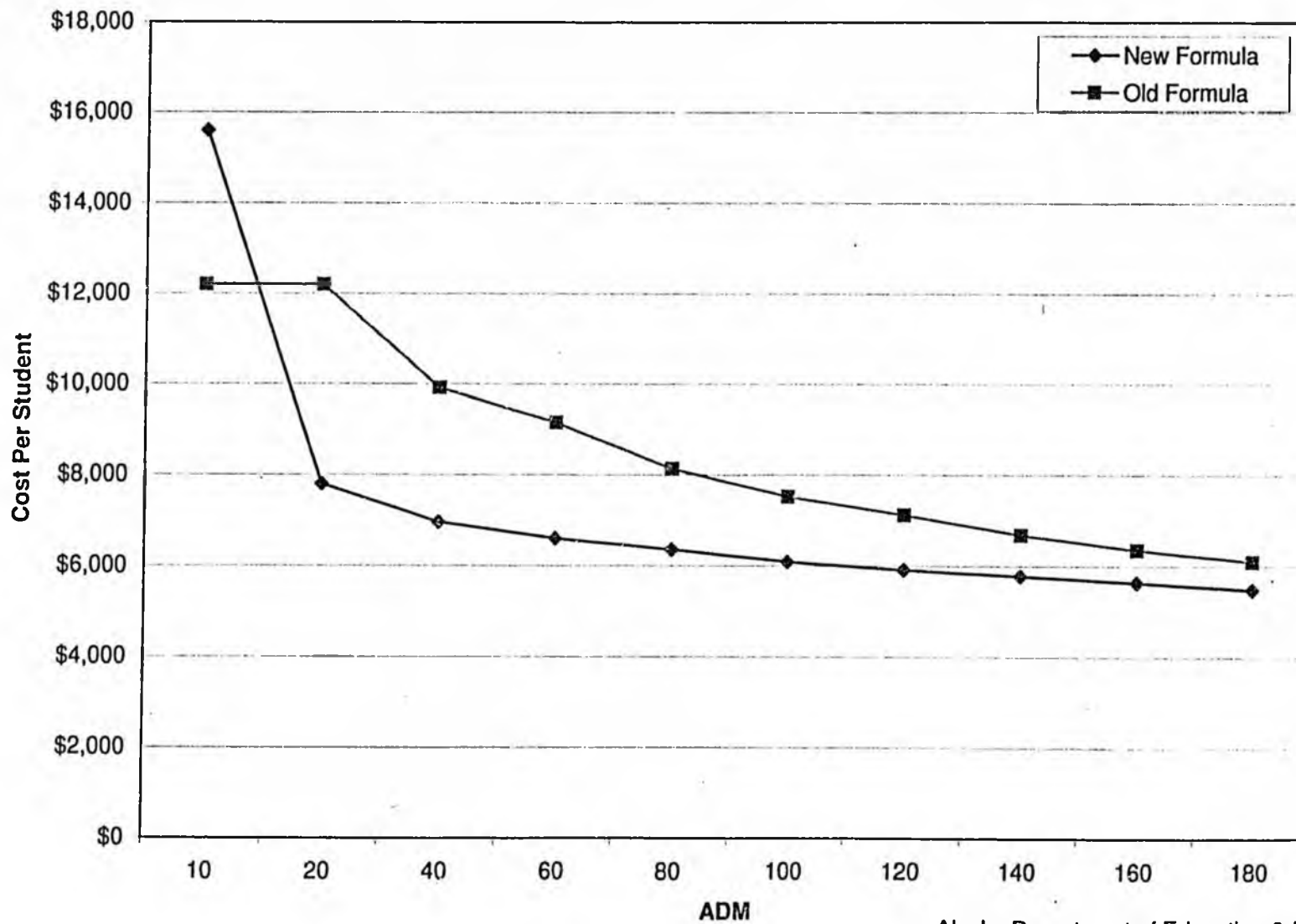
	Prior Funding Community Formula	SB35 Per School Formula	Change
Size Adjustment Including correspondence programs	614,147,116	606,662,800	(7,484,316)
Categorical Programs Special Ed., Gifted and Talented, Vocational and Bilingual/Bicultural	131,352,520	144,362,544	13,010,024
District Cost Factors	63,619,950	71,898,973	8,279,023
Basic Need	809,119,586	822,924,317	13,804,731
Required Local	(136,790,501)	(140,608,152)	(3,817,651)
Impact Aid	(43,363,354)	(41,830,973)	1,532,381
FY99 Cap on Increases @ 60%	-	(9,070,746)	(9,070,746)
Military Impact Aid and Contracts	24,592,406	24,592,406	-
State Aid	653,558,137	656,006,852	2,448,715
REAA Supplemental Funding	1,256,335	-	(1,256,335)
Quality School Grants	-	3,341,825	3,341,825
Supplemental Funding Floor	-	17,379,523	17,379,523
Total State Aid	654,814,472	676,728,200	21,913,728

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
 Changes in K-12 adjustments from funding communities to per school model FY99
 Prepared 11-10-2001

Table 2	Old Formula Funding Communities	New Formula Per School	Difference	Percentage Change
Alaska Gateway	3,656,340	3,154,640	(501,700)	-13.7%
Aleutian Region	740,540	468,072	(272,468)	-36.8%
Aleutians East Borough	2,475,990	2,149,432	(326,558)	-13.2%
Anchorage	197,508,240	203,848,863	6,340,623	3.2%
Annette Island	1,810,480	1,953,643	143,163	7.9%
Bering Strait	12,261,000	11,122,730	(1,138,270)	-9.3%
Bristol Bay Borough	1,690,310	1,777,566	87,256	5.2%
Chatham	2,144,760	1,927,251	(217,509)	-10.1%
Chugach	1,409,100	892,410	(516,690)	-36.7%
Copper River	4,381,020	4,072,806	(308,214)	-7.0%
Cordova	2,388,760	2,519,426	130,666	5.5%
Craig	2,124,630	2,268,376	143,746	6.8%
Delta/Greely	5,059,950	5,080,161	20,211	0.4%
Denali Borough	2,410,720	2,215,647	(195,073)	-8.1%
Dillingham	2,651,670	2,741,495	89,825	3.4%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	67,542,860	68,352,636	809,776	1.2%
Galena	13,368,150	10,844,692	(2,523,458)	-18.9%
Haines Borough	2,319,220	2,335,041	15,821	0.7%
Hoonah	1,304,790	1,372,615	67,825	5.2%
Hydaburg	805,810	736,169	(69,641)	-8.6%
Iditarod Area	4,152,270	3,125,888	(1,026,382)	-24.7%
Juneau Borough	23,771,090	24,084,720	313,630	1.3%
Kake	1,121,790	1,147,194	25,404	2.3%
Kashunamiut	1,500,600	1,591,839	91,239	6.1%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	49,004,960	48,661,963	(342,997)	-0.7%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	11,558,890	12,155,735	596,845	5.2%
Klawock	1,199,870	1,213,993	14,123	1.2%
Kodiak Island Borough	13,451,110	13,428,860	(22,250)	-0.2%
Kuspuk	3,847,270	3,168,793	(678,477)	-17.6%
Lake & Peninsula Borough	5,302,730	3,948,231	(1,354,499)	-25.5%
Lower Kuskokwim	21,763,580	20,242,022	(1,521,558)	-7.0%
Lower Yukon	11,325,870	11,190,132	(135,738)	-1.2%
Mat-Su Borough	57,596,810	55,059,952	(2,536,858)	-4.4%
Nenana	2,220,400	1,732,576	(487,824)	-22.0%
Nome	3,567,280	3,610,291	43,011	1.2%
North Slope Borough	11,112,370	10,882,926	(229,444)	-2.1%
Northwest Arctic Borough	12,067,020	11,721,480	(345,540)	-2.9%
Pelican	334,890	218,575	(116,315)	-34.7%
Petersburg	3,439,180	3,825,064	385,884	11.2%
Pribilof	1,216,340	1,055,234	(161,106)	-13.3%
Sitka Borough	7,316,950	7,714,756	397,806	5.4%
Skagway	888,770	831,553	(57,217)	-6.4%
Southeast Island	3,119,540	2,152,677	(966,863)	-31.0%
Southwest Region	5,347,260	5,027,109	(320,151)	-6.0%
St. Mary's	894,260	836,060	(58,200)	-6.5%
Tanana	772,870	689,855	(83,015)	-10.7%
Unalaska	1,801,940	1,944,260	142,320	7.9%
Valdez	3,837,510	4,178,380	340,870	8.9%
Wrangell	2,526,620	2,671,443	144,823	5.7%
Yakutat	1,138,870	1,040,318	(98,552)	-8.7%
Yukon Flats	3,625,230	2,554,020	(1,071,210)	-29.6%
Yukon/Koyukuk	4,668,330	3,772,625	(895,705)	-19.2%
Yupik	2,723,650	2,595,178	(128,472)	-4.7%
Alyeska Central School	6,259,546	7,250,037	990,491	15.8%
Mt. Edgecumbe High School	1,617,110	1,505,390	(111,720)	-6.9%
Totals	614,147,116	606,662,800	(7,484,316)	

Per Student Cost Between Formulas

Table 3

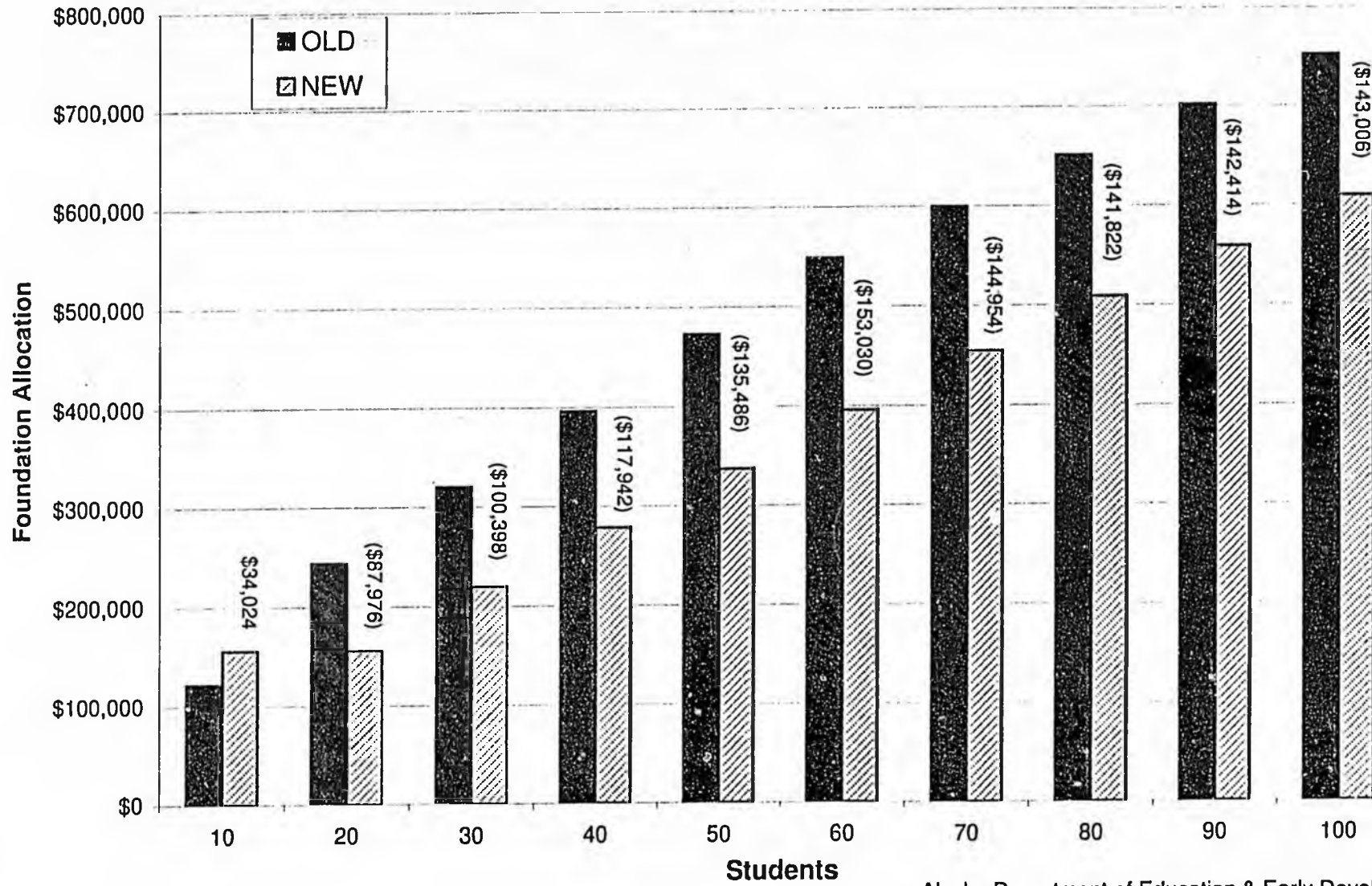


12

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

School Size Adjustment / Old Vs. New Formula

Table 4



Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

Table 5 1999 OLD versus NEW ADM

DISTRICT	# OF FUNDING COMM.	# OF SCHOOLS FOR ADJUST.	# OF SCHOOLS LESS THAN 100 ADM
ALASKA GATEWAY	7	8	6
ALEUTIANS EAST	6	3	3
ALEUTIAN REGION	3	8	4
ANCHORAGE	4	84	0
ANNETTE ISLANDS	1	2	0
BERING STRAIT	15	22	8
BRISTOL BAY	2	3	1
CHATHAM	5	6	4
CHUGACH	3	3	3
COPPER RIVER	7	9	5
CORDOVA	1	2	0
CRAIG	1	2	0
DELTA/GREELY	2	4	1
DENALI	3	4	2
DILLINGHAM	1	2	0
FAIRBANKS	5	28	0
GALENA	1	2	0
HAINES	2	2	0
HOONAH	1	2	0
HYDABURG	1	2	0
IDITAROD	9	9	7
JUNEAU	1	11	0
KAKE	1	2	0
KASHUNAMIUT	1	2	0
KENAI	21	39	9
KETCHIKAN	1	6	0
KLAWOCK	1	2	0
KODIAK	9	13	7
KUSPUK	8	9	8
LAKE AND PENINSULA	15	15	15
LOWER KUSKOKWIM	23	34	13
LOWER YUKON	11	19	3
MAT-SU	15	29	6
NENANA	1	2	0
NOME	1	2	0
NORTH SLOPE	8	13	4
NORTHWEST ARCTIC	11	19	3
PELICAN	1	1	1
PETERSBURG	1	3	0
PRIBILOF	2	3	1
SITKA	1	4	0
SKAGWAY	1	2	0
SOUTHEAST	11	9	7
SOUTHWEST	9	12	6
ST. MARY'S	1	2	0
TANANA	1	2	0
UNALASKA	1	2	0
VALDEZ	1	3	0
WRANGELL	1	2	0
YAKUTAT	2	2	0
YUKON FLATS	11	10	7
YUKON/KOYUKUK	10	11	9
YUPIIT	3	6	0
ALYESKA CORRES*	1	0	0
Mt. EDGE CUMBE	1	1	0
TOTALS	267	499	143

TAB 3

Educational Adequacy



Resolution of the State Board of Education & Early Development

On the Effective Date of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is committed to providing a public school system which produces qualified workers and competent citizens who have met high and rigorous academic standards; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska and Alaska school districts, educators, and parents have been working diligently to develop those standards; and,

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education & Early Development supports the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination as one means of assessing student mastery of state standards in reading, writing, and mathematics; and,

WHEREAS, the State Board believes that ALL children, including students with special needs, limited English proficiency and transient students, military dependents and students who enroll in Alaska late in their high school careers, must have the opportunity to learn in a public education system that recognizes and supports the abilities and individual learning styles of our children; and,

WHEREAS, the opportunity to learn requires qualified teachers, safe schools, curricula aligned to standards, and the opportunity to complete as much as possible the sequence of benchmark examinations in grades 3, 6, and 8; and,

WHEREAS, the state needs to provide the necessary resources to provide those opportunities to Alaska's current high school Class of 2002, the first class required to pass the exam to qualify for a high school diploma; and,

WHEREAS, it is probable that thousands of students will be denied diplomas in 2002 on the basis of a test our public school system has not yet prepared them to pass; so,

THEREFORE, the State Board of Education & Early Development urges Governor Knowles and the Alaska Legislature to adjust the effective date of the high stakes element of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination to 2006, while still administering the test;

BUILDING BLOCKS



Continuing the Progress of Smart Start

*The Next Steps for Supporting
Alaska's Young Children and Their Families*



Department of
Health & Social Services



Department of
Education & Early Development

STATE OF ALASKA

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

**Department of Education & Early Development
Department of Health & Social Services**

801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894

PO Box 110601
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0601

August 2000

Dear Alaskans:

Please join us in supporting these exciting next steps for Alaska's young children and their families. Our department staff and lots of you who work on behalf of children have dreamed of the day when everyone would work together in support of new and innovative ways to improve children's lives. We hope this document helps make that dream a reality.

It is the logical next step in ongoing efforts by Gov. Tony Knowles and Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer to help children succeed. Through creation of the Children's Cabinet, the "Smart Start for Alaska's Children" initiative, the Children's Budget and many other efforts, we have made great progress. We must keep moving forward.

Because we know the early years—prenatal through 8—are critical for overall child development, we must make sure those years are the best possible. We must work together to make sure every pregnant woman gets adequate prenatal care and nutrition; every child grows up in a nurturing, safe home and community; that all children have hope; and that all children succeed in school and life.


This report identifies many of the challenges facing our young children and their families. It also identifies outcomes, beginning strategies and indicators to help us measure progress. It is our belief that achieving these outcomes will make a significant difference in the health and well-being of Alaska's youngest citizens.

Our children need each of us—the agencies and organizations we work for, and our communities—to work together in new and exciting ways. Our challenge is:


- Are we willing to do things differently?
- What can each of us do?
- How can our programs and services be more coordinated and tailored to meet the individual needs of children, families and communities?
- What action are you willing to take and when?

We thank you for your past support of "Smart Start" and other efforts to improve child well-being. We look forward to working with you on this project to better the lives of every Alaska child.

Sincerely,



Richard S. Cross, Commissioner
Education & Early Development



Karen Perdue, Commissioner
Health & Social Services

TEAM MEMBERS

Co-Chairs

Karen Pearson

Deputy Director, Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

Marilyn Webb

Head Start Program Coordinator/Collaboration Director
Department of Education & Early Development (EED)

*A special thanks
to everyone who
assisted the team!*

Lisa Balivet

Coordinator, Child Care Programs, EED

Nancy Davis

Chief, Public Health Nursing, DHSS

Dorothy Douglas

Education Specialist, EED

Mary Lorence

Child Care Program Coordinator, DHSS

Sally Mead

Graduate Intern and Head Start Quality Center, Director

Pam Muth

Chief, Maternal, Child & Family Health, DHSS

Wendy Tada

Special Education Program Manager, EED

Margaret Thomas

Project Coordinator, EED

Robert Tumacder

Associate Coordinator, Child Care Programs, EED

Kathi Wineman

Education Specialist, EED

L. Diane Worley

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Coordinator, DHSS



STATE OF ALASKA

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

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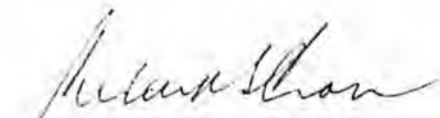
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Richard S. Cross, Commissioner
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A SHARED VISION

Alaska's young children will be healthy, safe, and successful at home, at school, and in their communities.

OUR PURPOSE

To improve the health and well-being of Alaska's young children, prenatal through age 8, by creating a comprehensive, collaborative initiative to ensure our collective energies address the critical outcomes and strategies that will support and improve the lives of Alaska's children and families and also that will help us gauge our progress.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our guiding principles consider the ideal early childhood system to be one that is:

- ◆ Developmentally appropriate
- ◆ Outcome-based and measurable
- ◆ Focused first on prevention
- ◆ Strength-based instead of deficit-based
- ◆ Focused on self-sufficiency
- ◆ Collaborative
- ◆ Locally owned/community-based
- ◆ Staffed by a quality workforce
- ◆ Assisted by effective management systems
- ◆ Non-duplicative
- ◆ Accessible
- ◆ Information based
- ◆ Seamless
- ◆ Comprehensive
- ◆ Built on providing hope and success for every child

INTRODUCTION

Building Blocks articulates a shared vision for our children—the critical outcomes and strategies that will improve child well-being and the measures that will help us gauge our progress. Our vision for healthy, successful children begins before birth and goes through childhood.

Consider that in 1997, 9,956 infants were born in our state and 41 of them died between their twenty-eighth day of life and their first birthday. These tragic numbers reflect one of the highest post-neonatal death rates in the nation and tell us that too many babies in Alaska aren't getting what they need to simply survive their first year of life. The reality is, the majority of these infant deaths are preventable.

Young children in our state face other significant hurdles. Therefore, this plan looks at:

- ◆ assuring maternal and child health;
- ◆ enhancing early care and education;
- ◆ supporting healthy stable families;
- ◆ developing supportive neighborhoods and communities; and
- ◆ establishing support systems.

We recognize that childhood is a continuum where strength builds upon strength. Together, we will continue the hard work of supporting young children and their families.

WHERE WE START

We begin by identifying the tasks that the state Departments of Education & Early Development and Health and Social Services can undertake to support children and families. It is essential for these two departments, which bear primary responsibility for children's programs and services, to develop sustainable partnerships and a commitment to plan and deliver comprehensive services to children and families.

It is our intent to work together to erase the notion that young lives can be divided neatly into agency jurisdictions, and to recognize that childhood is a continuum where strength builds on strength.

Using this initial document as a framework, we will continue the hard work of describing exactly what must be done, when and by whom.

WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

Families are the foundation for each child's success and each Alaskan has a role; it is the state's responsibility to partner with families and communities to help children grow up safe, healthy and successful.

As our families, communities and businesses take up specific strategies, things will improve for children. We know that by reversing trends in some critical areas of children's lives, we can expect to see improvement in many other areas as well. The net result will be children who are successful now and, finally, as adults.

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

This initiative frames common goals for children birth to age 8, sets out broad strategies, both traditional and innovative, and identifies how we will measure progress.

The strategies included here are intended as a beginning. There is room to review, evaluate and change.

It is our hope that this effort will inspire each of us to ask ourselves:

What can my community do?
What can my agency/business do?
What can I do?

ASSURING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Challenges

Most Alaska mothers and their young children are healthy and thriving. There remains, however, much room for improvement. Alaska has a high rate of unintended pregnancies and performs poorly on measures of prenatal health. More alarming still, is the fact that Alaska has one of the nation's highest death rates for babies between one month and one year of age. Among children ages 1 to 14, deaths due to illness and injury consistently exceed the national average.

This section focuses on improving birth outcomes and the newborn's earliest environment; ensuring that children maintain physical and mental health; and protecting children from harm and injury. We will work towards:

Planned Pregnancies

Unintended pregnancy is the common thread that connects many risk factors for babies. In Alaska, 41 percent of babies born during 1997 were the result of unintended pregnancies. According to an Institute of Medicine report, women with unintended pregnancies are:

- ◆ More likely to expose the fetus to harmful substances;
- ◆ Less likely to seek early prenatal care;
- ◆ At greater risk of separating from their husband or partner;
- ◆ At greater risk of economic hardship;
- ◆ More likely to report having experienced domestic violence; and
- ◆ More likely to abuse drugs or alcohol.

In 1997, 15 percent of infant deaths in Alaska were caused, in part, by maternal drug or alcohol abuse, according to a recent study. In an additional 21 percent of infant deaths that year, parental drug or alcohol abuse was documented.

Safe Motherhood

Physical violence against women during pregnancy is another serious health concern. Ten percent of Alaska mothers who delivered a baby between 1996 and 1997 reported that they were abused in the year prior to or during their pregnancy. The problem is especially prevalent among teenagers and Alaska Native women. Women who are involved in violence or who are physically assaulted during pregnancy are significantly more likely to deliver babies that are premature, distressed or stillborn.

By informing Alaskans about relevant health issues and making good prenatal care accessible, we can increase the number of babies born healthy.



The three most common causes of infant death in Alaska are pre-term birth, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and other suffocation of unknown cause, and birth defects. Based on current scientific knowledge, an estimated 42 percent of these deaths are preventable.

Reduction of Adverse Birth Outcomes

The risk of adverse birth outcomes also goes up when a pregnant woman:

- ◆ Is less than 18 years of age;
- ◆ Is more than 35 years of age;
- ◆ Has had four or more previous births;
- ◆ Has conceived more than once in 18 months; or
- ◆ Is carrying multiple fetuses, particularly as a result of assisted reproductive technology.

Keeping Children Safe

Alaska children face other dangers as they grow up. In 1997, there were 41 deaths among children between the ages of 1 and 9 in Alaska. Of these deaths, 63 percent were the result of injury.

Motor vehicle accidents accounted for the largest number of deaths, followed by plane crashes, drowning, poisonings and fires. The Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics estimates that among children under age 7 who died in Alaska in 1997, 38 percent were not adequately supervised at the time they were fatally injured. Sixteen percent died when houses without working smoke detectors caught fire.

Statewide, 15 in every 1,000 Alaska children suffers from abuse — most at the hands of a parent.

Abuse and neglect deaths in Alaska are six times more common among infants of mothers with less than a 12th grade education.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1997, 15 percent of infant deaths in Alaska were caused, in part, by maternal drug or alcohol abuse, according to a recent study. In an additional 21 percent of infant deaths that year, parental drug or alcohol abuse was documented.

A recent survey of Alaska women of childbearing age found that only 24 percent knew that folic acid prevents birth defects.

An estimated 70 percent of Alaska mothers do not receive domestic violence screening in prenatal care settings.

Positive Outcomes

These are some of the challenges that face us as we attempt to assure maternal and child health. By working together, we can achieve the desired positive outcomes to ensure healthy, successful children.

OUTCOME #1

Babies are born healthy.

Achieving this goal means providing information and support to Alaskans before and during pregnancy to help them give their babies the best start in life.

By informing Alaskans about relevant health issues and making good prenatal care accessible, we can increase the number of babies born healthy.

Specifically, we can:

- ◆ Reduce the number of fetal and infant deaths;
- ◆ Reduce the number of babies born underweight or pre-term;
- ◆ Reduce the occurrence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, developmental disabilities, spinal bifida and other neural tube defects, and HIV in newborns; and
- ◆ Ensure that health problems are identified and treated early.



Suggested Strategies

1. Make prenatal care more accessible and affordable for Alaska women.
2. Support domestic violence screening, intervention and referral systems in prenatal-care settings.
3. Develop a statewide public awareness campaign about the importance of appropriate prenatal care, including the use of multivitamins and folic acid.
4. Discourage the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs before conception and during pregnancy.
5. Ensure that women of childbearing age have immediate access to alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs.
6. Assure that pre-conceptional education is available to Alaska women to provide them with information about alternatives to childbearing, health habits and other issues to be considered when planning a pregnancy.
7. Assure that contraceptive services are available to mothers for at least 18 months after the birth of a child.
8. Implement a universal newborn hearing screening program that provides screening, assessment, diagnosis and treatment for hearing disorders.
9. Support public-awareness campaigns aimed at preventing infant injury and death (such as the "Back to Sleep" and the "Never Shake a Baby" campaigns.)
10. Make certain that eligible pregnant women and babies are enrolled in Denali KidCare and WIC.

OUTCOME #2

Children's physical health and mental health needs are met.

Disease prevention and early detection of health problems can profoundly influence a child's future soundness of body and mind. Children need routine and preventive medical and oral health care, and attention to behavioral and developmental issues. Specialized, interdisciplinary treatment should be available to children with complex or chronic health problems.

In addition to biological factors affecting a child's health, normal growth and development depend on good nutrition, comprehensive health care, and a safe home and environment.



Suggested Strategies

1. Increase the number and percent of schools offering child care and other services that encourage young mothers to complete high school.
2. Increase the number of school nurses in schools state-wide.
3. Ensure that all women and young children have access to adequate nutrition.
4. Ensure that all newborns, before leaving the hospital, receive a comprehensive health and developmental screening/examination.
5. Ensure that babies identified on newborn screenings (metabolic and hearing) leave the hospital with a plan for follow-up evaluation and treatment if necessary.
6. Offer a follow-up telephone call or home visit to all families of newborns to answer questions and assess the health of the mother and child.
7. Ensure that high-risk newborns, such as low-birth-weight babies, receive appropriate care in the hospital and at home following discharge.
8. Provide regular, periodic, developmental and basic physical and mental health screenings for all children.
9. Ensure that children identified through evaluations as having special health or developmental needs receive appropriate services.
10. Encourage families to establish a continuing relationship with a primary healthcare provider.
11. Promote public awareness about the importance of immunizations for children from birth to 5 year olds. Ensure easy access to immunizations.
12. Ensure that children who are removed from their natural homes receive appropriate physical and mental health and developmental assessments to determine what services they need.
13. Identify and refer families who may be eligible for Medicaid or child insurance programs.
14. Provide school-based health and counseling programs, including substance abuse counseling and treatment for young children.
15. Increase the number of children with access to affordable medical, dental and mental health care.

OUTCOME #3

Children are free from harm and injury.

Alaska has the second highest rate in the nation for post-neonatal deaths, those occurring between the first month and first year of life. Only the District of Columbia fares worse on this measure.

The post-neonatal death rate is closely associated with specific risk factors in babies' homes, including drug or alcohol abuse, domestic violence, child abuse or neglect, or serious maternal illness.

Beyond infancy, Alaska children face other dangers at home and in their neighborhoods and communities. Between 1994 and 1997, young children in Alaska required hospitalization as a result of 355 falls, 118 poisonings and 55 dog bites.

Suggested Strategies

1. Implement a child-injury prevention program that focuses on both intentional and unintentional injuries.
2. Promote public awareness of and intolerance for child abuse and neglect.
3. Ensure that criminal records checks are part of the hiring procedure for all staff in any facility that deals with the direct care of children.
4. Ensure that the state adequately monitors foster homes to promote the health and safety of the foster child.
5. Promote the use of safety devices: child passenger restraints, life-jackets, helmets, smoke detectors and gun locks.
6. Expand proven parent education, including traditional cultural-based parenting, and support counseling programs to teach parents non-violent conflict resolution in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
7. Implement community-based programs to help families and children cope with the effects of living in unsafe and violent communities.

Last year, the state Division of Family & Youth Services received 16,294 reports of suspected child abuse. About two-thirds of these reports involved children under 10 years of age.

INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure progress and gauge success in achieving outcomes:

- ◆ The rate of unintended pregnancy
- ◆ The proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care
- ◆ The rate of alcohol, cigarettes, and illicit drug use among pregnant women
- ◆ The post-neonatal death (between 28 days and one year) rate
- ◆ The rate of completed immunizations for children 5 years of age
- ◆ The rate of intentional and unintentional injuries in children 1-8 years of age
- ◆ The rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect
- ◆ The number of children wait-listed for early intervention services

Next steps to assuring maternal and child health

What can my community do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can my agency/business do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can I do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ENHANCING EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Background

Early care and education refers to programs serving children from birth through age 8. Recent research links high-quality early care and education to long-term positive outcomes for children in educational achievement, economic well-being and social/emotional behavior.

Key markers of high-quality programs are:

- ◆ healthy, safe environments;
- ◆ adequately staffed with well-trained and well-compensated personnel;
- ◆ family-centered, recognizing families as the primary educators and nurturers of children;
- ◆ community-based, recognizing that the most effective programs are planned for and implemented locally;
- ◆ child-centered and developmentally appropriate with on-going and varied methods of assessments;
- ◆ nurturing of staff, children and families;
- ◆ culturally responsive;
- ◆ inclusive of children with special needs and abilities; and
- ◆ supportive of children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual well-being.



Additionally, research shows providing effective services for young children is less about bridging the gap between different types of programs and more about ensuring continuity in these key markers of quality.

The benefits of high-quality early care and education can only be maintained if the same key elements of quality are present in all types of programs, including public school programs. As more parents and families understand the key elements of high-quality programs, they will require it for their children.

Adults born in poverty who attended a high-quality, active learning preschool program, have half as many criminal arrests and have higher earnings and property wealth than those who did not. The public will receive more than \$7 in return for every dollar invested in quality preschools.

DID YOU KNOW?

In January 1998, there were 450 active family child care providers who were exempt from licensing regulations and who self-certified that they met the minimum health and safety standards. In May 2000, this number totaled 1,100.

Despite a high exposure to illness on the job, less than one-third of child care workers have health insurance and even fewer have a pension plan. The average wage of child care workers in Alaska is \$8 an hour.

During Fiscal Year 1999, Alaska lost approximately 733 licensed child care spaces.

OUTCOME #1

All early care and education for children birth through age 8 is high quality.

Recent studies indicate that most of the settings where young children receive care fall short of the key markers of quality. Directly linked to program quality are staff education and experience, wages and turnover rate.

Today, providers who work in child care settings receive poverty level wages with few or no benefits or training opportunities. Low wages and poor working conditions account for the fact that child care has one of the highest turnover rates of any occupation.

Other critical links to quality are the standards and regulations that guide early care and education programs; and the state's ability to provide technical assistance, monitor programs and enforce regulations.

Suggested Strategies

1. Establish early care and education program standards and regulations that reflect markers of quality.
2. Require all early care and education programs to meet or exceed established health, safety and program standards.
3. Develop and implement trainer qualification and course standards for early childhood education across the state.
4. Provide statewide access to professional development in early childhood education.
5. Establish education standards for early care and education practitioners.
6. Require early care and education practitioners to meet educational standards for their position.

In 1999, Head Start served 3,351 children —23 percent of the eligible children who live in poverty.

7. Improve the wages and benefits of people who work in the early care and education field.
8. Require all early care and education programs to have an active parent involvement component.

OUTCOME #2

All children and families can find and access appropriate early care and education.

Access to reliable, high-quality programs that meet the individual needs of children and families is essential for parents to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency; for children's health and intellectual development; and to provide support for children at risk.

Family economic pressures, welfare reform, single-parent homes and other factors all have contributed to an increased demand for out-of-home care and education.

While some families have reasonable access to early care and education programs, a substantial number of Alaska families cannot find or afford care that meets their needs. For example, regular early care and education arrangements are often beyond the reach of working poor families if they do not have access to subsidies.

Specialized care for infants, children with special needs or care that accommodates evening, weekend or rotating work schedules is in short supply.

Some children live in families that face serious challenges and risk factors such as poverty, abuse and neglect, illiteracy, homelessness and serious emotional/behavior problems.

These risk factors can seriously compromise child and family well-being. Fortunately, risk is not destiny. Study after study shows that timely, intensive and comprehensive early intervention can improve quality of life and give children at risk a chance for success.

Suggested Strategies

1. Increase the supply of early care and education programs for all children birth through age 8, especially programs serving infant/toddlers and school-age children, and those operating during non-traditional hours.
2. Increase opportunities for all children, ages 3-5, to participate in early childhood education programs.
3. Provide opportunities for children with special needs to be educated and receive services with their non-disabled age mates in typical early childhood settings.



The average annual cost of college tuition at the University of Alaska is \$3,465. The average annual cost of preschool care in Fairbanks is \$5,676. The average annual cost of infant care in Fairbanks is \$6,840.

Specialized care for infants; children with special needs; or care that accommodates evening, weekend or rotating work schedules is in short supply.

4. Change the subsidy rate schedule to reflect the policy of parents paying no more than 10 percent of their income for child care.
5. Provide parents and the public with consumer information that promotes informed early care and education choices.
6. Encourage employer involvement in providing child care resources for employees.
7. Provide technical assistance to communities interested in determining and planning for the child care needs of parents, families and children in their community.

OUTCOME #3

All children have the opportunities and supports they need to succeed in school.

When children have appropriate supports during their early years, they are more likely to enter kindergarten socially and linguistically competent, and physically and emotionally healthy.

These supports cannot end at the beginning of public school. To maintain the developmental growth and progress made by children in the early years, elementary schools must ensure key markers of quality are present in public school programs.

Currently, prevention and early intervention programs in Alaska serve only a fraction of eligible children. In 1999, Head Start served 3,351 children—23 percent of the eligible children who live in poverty. Even Start Family Literacy programs served 164 children and 75 families of enrolled children.



Suggested Strategies

1. Support children in the continuation of their home culture and language while helping them to speak, read and write English.
2. Provide resources for children in transition and those who are not making expected developmental progress to receive individual supports.
3. Require K-3 teachers to be certified in early childhood development or acquire an early childhood endorsement.
4. Use a variety of appropriate methods to regularly assess and monitor children's progress in all areas of development.
5. Establish partnerships between parents, health, social services, early care and education programs, elementary schools, local boards and organizations to insure continuity of quality, comprehensive care and education through grade 3.

6. Develop collaborative health plans that address health and education, including: environment; health education; meals and nutrition; physical education; health services; counseling, psychological and mental health services; staff wellness; family/parent and community partnerships.
7. Support elementary schools in their efforts to have an ongoing and comprehensive safety/conflict resolution program in place, which is coordinated between families, the school, and the community.
8. Ensure mental health specialists are available to assist early care and education providers, teachers, parents and other program personnel with the identification of early warning signs of negative or disruptive behavior, barriers to learning and child/student success, and to provide guidance and intervention strategies.
9. Require full-day/every-day kindergarten, with children in attendance at least four hours a day.

Fortunately, risk is not destiny. Study after study shows that timely, intensive and comprehensive early intervention can improve quality of life and give children at risk a chance for success.

INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure progress and gauge success in achieving outcomes:

- ◆ Percent of providers/teachers who have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or beyond in early childhood education
- ◆ Average wage of staff at child care centers
- ◆ Number of early care and education programs that meet national accreditation standards for quality
- ◆ Percent of child care providers working in the same program continuously for one year
- ◆ Number of child care slots available for every 100 infants
- ◆ Number of child care slots available for every 100 children ages 12 months to 13 years
- ◆ Percent of eligible Head Start children who are served
- ◆ Percent of all kindergartners who attended preschool
- ◆ Percent of students proficient in reading, writing, and math at the end of third grade
- ◆ Percent of kindergarten children who demonstrate all of the tasks/behaviors in the four developmental areas included on the Alaska Developmental Profile

Next steps to enhancing early care and education

What can my community do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can my agency/business do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can I do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

SUPPORTING HEALTHY STABLE FAMILIES

Possibilities

From the moment of birth, children depend on their parents and families to provide for their needs. Families are responsible for:

- ◆ **Economic support.** The family is the social unit that provides life-sustaining resources—food, clothing, shelter and other necessities.
- ◆ **Health care and wellness.** In addition to providing for the basic health care needs of children, the family must protect its members against family and community violence, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- ◆ **Education and socialization.** The family is the primary educator of children and is responsible for transmitting social and cultural values. Setting, teaching and enforcing rules, norms and appropriate behaviors transmits social values.
- ◆ **Family maintenance.** Families are the main providers of the emotional nurturance, intimacy, understanding and support that sustains children.



Young children have a greater chance of achieving success if these needs are met. When these needs have been met, children have the opportunity to grow physically, emotionally and intellectually.

Some families face challenges and hardships that make it difficult or impossible to meet the needs of their children. For families facing multiple hardships, comprehensive prevention and early intervention, extended family and community support are essential.

Extensive research tells us that children are naturally resilient beings, and that, given the right supports, healthy children can emerge from unhealthy situations.

The main characteristics of resilient children are:

- ◆ social competence;
- ◆ problem solving ability;
- ◆ a positive outlook on life;
- ◆ a sense of autonomy; and
- ◆ a sense of control over what happens to them.

DID YOU KNOW?

Instead of waiting for children to experience multiple hardships, our systems should act earlier, integrate and enhance what is available to families and aim to practice family-centered services.

This focus area is directed at ensuring the basic needs of all children are met—that parents and families have the supports they need to nurture their children. If these goals are met, children are likely to be safe in their homes.

For those children who need external supports to keep them safe, services must be provided swiftly to guarantee their safety.

Instead of waiting for children to experience multiple hardships, our systems should act earlier, integrate and enhance what is available to families and aim to practice family-centered services.

In Alaska, eighty-three percent of female prison inmates were sexually abused before the age of 12.

Seventy percent of all open child protection cases involve some form of substance abuse.

The economic stability of families is fundamental to the well-being of children.

OUTCOME #1

Children live in families where their basic needs are met.

Children are dependent on the adults in their lives and on the environment around them to provide for their most basic needs including food, clothing, safe and secure housing, health care and freedom from harm.

Beyond these basic needs children require healthy experiences that promote their physical, social and emotional development. In order for families to meet even the most basic needs of children, they must have training, education and opportunities for meaningful employment. The economic stability of families is fundamental to the well-being of children.

Suggested Strategies

1. Promote employability of parents so they have the possibility of jobs with benefits and affordable child care that will allow them to work.
2. Ensure families receive assistance for basic needs, especially health care, while building skills to become self-sufficient.
3. Support the development of accessible housing for families with different income levels.

OUTCOME #2

Parents and families have the skills and knowledge to nurture, educate and advocate for their children and themselves.

Most Alaska families get the support they need to meet the needs of their children. But for some families, life is changing in ways that can undermine efforts to nurture children.

Every family, regardless of income or education, needs support to meet their children's needs and to deal with today's parenting challenges.

Supports are the skills, opportunities, experiences and resources that help families fulfill their responsibilities, grow and develop, overcome challenges and achieve success.

Supports may include the expertise of a pediatrician, the encouragement of a teacher, a job training program, or guidance from the family's church. Supports are not meant to become a substitute for families; they are intended to strengthen family functioning.

One of the most often cited family stressors is the growing economic pressure on families. Today, there are more working mothers and more single parent families—26 percent of Alaska families are headed by single parents; more family isolation and violence; and more young children in poverty—12-19 percent statewide with rates as high as 30 percent in Southwest Alaska.

Families experiencing these and other challenges need extra help to meet the basic needs of their children.

Suggested Strategies

1. Provide all families with information about early development.
2. Include parents in planning and decision-making processes at both the program and individual service level.
3. Provide parents with needed supports to foster their child's development, especially parents of children with special needs.
4. Provide all students with information on child development, brain development, effects of substance abuse on prenatal and child development, and family violence issues before they leave high school.
5. Ensure that all families have necessary literacy skills to support their child's language development.

Every family, regardless of income or education, needs support to meet their children's needs and to deal with today's parenting challenges.



OUTCOME #3

Children live in families that have access to a continuum of health and human services.

Of primary importance for all families is access to competent and comprehensive health and human services. All children need services like well-baby checkups, immunizations, nutrition services, and access to health care professionals when they are sick.

Some families will need long-term access to services and supports. For example, a child born with special needs will need the expertise of an infant/toddler specialist, specialized supports during their preschool years, and continuing assistance in public schools.

There must be a check-and-balance system—a continuum of care and support—where individuals, families, schools, peer groups, and community institutions work together effectively when there are problems in children's lives.

All children need services like well-baby checkups, immunizations, nutrition services, and access to health care professionals when they are sick.

Suggested Strategies

1. Create and support integrated community teams that use a strength-based family service model in planning for and delivering services.
2. Ensure all children and families have access to a continuum of services.
3. Identify and minimize barriers to service accessibility, including: transportation, child care, cost of services, access without lengthy waiting visits, service delivery that makes sense for families (i.e. schools, homes, neighborhood centers).
4. Develop outreach strategies for isolated families so they can access community-based service delivery.
5. Increase the pool of mental health professionals who are qualified to serve young children and their families and ensure they are accessible to schools, child protection caseworkers, early care and education providers.

OUTCOME #4

Children live in violence-free homes.

If the three previous outcomes are met, children are likely to be safe in their homes. However, many children and families face severe hardships.

The most destructive force facing Alaska children is living in homes where there is family violence, and alcohol and drug abuse. Statistics demonstrate that domestic violence is a leading indicator that child abuse is occurring in the same household. Unfortunately, our support systems may not act when there is no evidence of physical harm against the child.

For those children who are at-risk of physical and emotional harm, it is critical that services be provided as early as possible, reducing the need for children to be removed from their homes to guarantee their safety.

Tiers of support are needed to ensure all children are safe, beginning with prevention and early intervention programs.

Suggested Strategies

1. Develop a three-tiered support system to provide comprehensive intervention services to families who: 1) exhibit early warning signs of risk; 2) have been identified through the child protection system as at risk of out-of-home placement for their children; and 3) require immediate action to remove children from harm.
2. Provide mental health services for all children who are identified as at risk, who have been taken into state custody, or who have been referred for mental health assessment by families, child care providers, teachers, or human service providers.
3. Require a risk-assessment on all children in the home when an incident of domestic violence has been reported.
4. Require a substance abuse screening for parents/guardians of children taken into custody.
5. Establish a permanency plan for each child taken into custody.
6. Ensure substance abuse programs are immediately accessible, culturally diverse, match the needs of the individual and provide aftercare supports in the home community.
7. Continue the development of statewide child abuse prevention networks that emphasize community resource building and the development of a prevention framework that is comprehensive, consistent and integrated statewide.



Tiers of support are needed to ensure all children are safe, beginning with prevention and early intervention programs.

INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure our progress and gauge success in achieving our outcomes:

- ◆ Percent of stable new families: first birth to mother who has completed high school, is age 20 or older and father's name is recorded on birth certificate
- ◆ Number of families with income below the Federal poverty threshold
- ◆ Percent of children entitled to child support who are receiving it
- ◆ Number of people on waiting lists for community mental health and infant learning services, etc.
- ◆ Number of families receiving food stamps
- ◆ Number of domestic violence reports where children are witnesses

57755

Next steps to supporting healthy stable families

What can my community do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can my agency/business do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can I do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DEVELOPING SUPPORTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

Opportunities

Alaska is blessed with a rich diversity. Alaskans live in small villages and tiny towns, on islands, in highway communities, and in suburban and urban neighborhoods. Even within larger populations there are many sub groups who share a common vision and values that represent another kind of community.

What all communities share is the opportunity for collective action to promote healthy circumstances for young children and their families. Strategies for change have been found to be most effective when they grow out of communities and when they are led by local people and organizations.

The state can encourage and support local efforts and assure that policies and service systems do not create barriers to community success. It is, however, vital for the community to engage the public and build the political will for change.

At a national level, the Healthy Community Agenda Campaign has identified seven characteristics of a healthy community. These patterns should be viewed as complimentary and as having a cumulative positive effect.

A healthy community

1. **Practices Ongoing Dialogue.** Seeks to build relationships among residents to create a shared commitment to take action.
2. **Generates Leadership Everywhere.** Seeks to cultivate new leaders, using effective styles of facilitation and collaboration to make sure everyone is heard, and builds the commitment and wherewithal to improve.
3. **Shapes Its Future.** Recognizes a problem and starts to do something about it, finds out that others are interested and creates a shared vision, realizing that there is much within their control.
4. **Embraces Diversity.** Sees diversity and differences as a source of vitality, strength, and renewal. Recognizes the community is not all it can be until everyone is participating.
5. **Knows Itself.** Seeks data and information about the community, knows what data needs to be collected based on what is important to the community. Does not allow the lack of data to be an excuse for inaction.

What all communities share is the opportunity for collective action to promote healthy circumstances for young children and their families.



Strategies for change have been found to be most effective when they grow out of communities and when they are led by local people and organizations.

6. **Connects People and Resources.** Helps to connect people to health care and social services, cultural offerings, and recreational opportunities. Recognizes that an accessible and resource-rich environment leads to improved health and quality of life.
7. **Creates a Sense of Community.** Understands who and what they are, based on a shared set of values and behavioral standards, neighborliness, an acknowledgment of interdependence and a commitment to the common good.

By taking action and making choices that support these seven characteristics, a community is moving toward realizing a broad definition of health and well-being that includes concerns for personal well-being, society, the economy and the environment.

There is evidence that the patterns and the actions that support them, will lead to healthier people, in economically and socially viable communities that preserve the riches of the natural environment.

OUTCOME #1

Children are safe in their communities.

Young children depend on communities and neighborhoods to take deliberate steps to ensure their safety and provide opportunities for play and development. There must be adequate environmental safeguards, including safe water for drinking, appropriate sewage and waste disposal, and clean-air standards.

There must be adequate protections against the leading causes of death in young Alaska children—unintentional and intentional injuries. Appropriate child-protection systems, relief and support systems for parents and children in distress, as well as safeguards related to transportation, firearms, toxins, communicable diseases, and crime must be in place to give children the security they need.

There must be adequate environmental safeguards, including safe water for drinking, appropriate sewage and waste disposal, and clean-air standards.

Suggested Strategies

1. Establish community standards for safe playgrounds.
2. Ensure that communities know the types of injuries children experience and understand their causes.
3. Support community policies and practices to eliminate or reduce known hazards.
4. Promote safety programs or coalitions in communities that increase protections for young children.
5. Assure adequate animal control efforts to prevent bites and mauling.

6. Develop community plans for shelter or safe homes for families suffering from domestic violence.
7. Assure an adequate police, fire and emergency response system.
8. Educate community members regarding the health and safety of all children in the community so they can take action when children are in danger.
9. Ensure that the community has appropriate standards for clean air, safe water, sewage and waste disposal.

We must provide adequate protections against the leading causes of death in young Alaska children—unintentional and intentional injuries.

OUTCOME #2

OUTCOME #2

Children grow up in communities where healthy behaviors are valued.

Healthy communities articulate and model behaviors that promote the well-being of young children.

These behaviors encompass all aspects of life—from physical fitness to healthy relationships. However, some of the behaviors most detrimental to children in our state relate to the use and abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, inhalants and tobacco.

Healthy communities look for ways to discourage children from using harmful substances, and step in when adult use threatens the health and safety of young children.

Communities that are clear and consistent about behavioral standards lay a foundation of support that helps families make choices that are in the best interests of their children.

Suggested Strategies

1. Ensure zero tolerance for drunken driving.
2. Educate the community regarding local rates of smoking and other tobacco use and about community action to stop vendors who sell to children.
3. Educate the community about local rates for alcohol consumption and alcohol-related crime.
4. Support community efforts to prevent tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse including exposure to second-hand smoke.
5. Encourage community sponsorship of social and recreational opportunities for children and families to promote physical fitness and healthy lifestyles.
6. Ensure services are available in the community for those battling drug, alcohol and tobacco addiction.
7. Promote community support and sponsorship of public-awareness campaigns aimed at preventing common health problems.



OUTCOME #3

Children live in communities that plan and act collectively in their best interest.

Children thrive when there are a variety of supports and opportunities available in their community.

Children thrive when there are a variety of supports and opportunities available in their community. In these communities, every generation is actively involved in the support of young children. Communities that value and protect young children and their families show a commitment to child-rearing that benefits the whole population.

Local governmental policies and laws can support families by subsidizing or reducing fees for young children's activities. Community organizations and businesses can put in place family-friendly policies and practices.

Faith communities can provide reliable support for children and families. By taking on responsibilities outside of their own families, individual volunteers also can make meaningful investments in their communities.

Suggested Strategies

1. Assist communities in writing a plan for supporting young children and their families.
2. Help communities develop mentoring programs, family supports and activities that are intergenerational.
3. Help communities promote inclusive community dialogue on issues of concern to children and their families.
4. Help communities develop neighborhood parks and play areas that are child and family friendly.
5. Encourage communities to recruit parents of young children for local policy or advisory committees or boards.
6. Provide community-specific data about the health and well-being of young children.
7. Encourage volunteers to work with and support young children in their communities.



OUTCOME #4

Children live in communities where facilities are available for broad use.

Communities can support children and their families by making public facilities available for their use. These facilities include schools, libraries, health clinics, hospitals, recreational facilities, community activities centers, senior centers, child-care centers, museums and theaters.

Facilities that welcome children provide a sense of community and promote safe, positive experiences.

We recognize that, increasingly, community resources are necessary to build and maintain public facilities. To support children and families, communities need economic stability—which goes beyond the scope of this project. However, it is important for all children to have a variety of opportunities within their communities, regardless of family income.

Suggested Strategies

1. Support opening schools for community use outside of regular school hours.
2. Support community efforts to make other public buildings available for activities that involve young children and their families.
3. Help communities find ways to support local facilities that sponsor or plan activities for young children.
4. Encourage local businesses to support or sponsor activities for children in their community.
5. Support community efforts to develop adequate housing.
6. Support community efforts to ensure that few families with young children live in poor or very poor neighborhoods.
7. Support community efforts to develop and maintain streets and other public places.

INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure progress and gauge success in achieving outcomes:

- ◆ Crime rate
- ◆ Incidence of alcohol-related crime
- ◆ Incidence of alcohol-related child abuse and neglect
- ◆ Voter turnout rate for local elections
- ◆ Number of schools open for use outside of regular school hours

Communities can support children and their families by making public facilities available for their use.

It is important for all children to have a variety of opportunities within their communities, regardless of family income.

Next steps for developing supportive neighborhoods and communities ...

STEPS

What can my community do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can my agency/business do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can I do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ESTABLISHING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Collaboration

Building Blocks identifies significant and measurable outcomes for our youngest children and their families.

Success in achieving and maintaining desired outcomes for children is directly tied to state and local support systems working together.

The state is responsible for:

- ◆ Creating child and family policy through legislative and executive action;
- ◆ Setting policy guidelines and standards;
- ◆ Generating state revenues and receiving revenues from federal and private sources;
- ◆ Administering funds through contracts, grants, etc. to other state agencies, local agencies or private providers;
- ◆ Creating and providing training and technical assistance to state, local and private personnel;
- ◆ Monitoring for compliance with established federal and state policy and guidelines;
- ◆ Setting research and data collection priorities and evaluating outcomes at both the state and local level; and
- ◆ Initiating planning efforts to ensure a package of comprehensive, seamless services are available to children and families across departments.

In Alaska, the state departments of Education & Early Development and Health and Social Services administer the majority of children's programs. Five other departments also administer programs for children and families.

The state has taken some significant steps in building strong inter-departmental and community relationships. Through the Governor's Children's Cabinet, the annual State of the Child Address, the Governor's Budget for Children, implementation of the Alaska Children's Trust, and consolidation of some children's programs in the expanded Department of



The strength of support systems can be found in the way state agencies work together and the relationships they establish within local communities.

If the state is to make progress in improving outcomes for children, both the legislative and executive branches of government must maintain a strong and directed focus on early childhood issues and establish them as a high priority in legislative, funding and policy agendas.

Education & Early Development, the executive branch has established a strong policy focus on young children and their families.

If the state is to make progress in improving outcomes for children, both the legislative and executive branches of government must maintain a strong and directed focus on early childhood issues and establish them as a high priority in legislative, funding and policy agendas.

The strength of support systems can be found in the way state agencies work together and the relationships they establish within local communities. While a strong cabinet-level relationship has been established, few formal mechanisms exist at the program manager level to build collaborative relationships.

Personal relationships seem to be the primary reason that state agencies work, or do not work together. Consequently, there is no guarantee that departments will collaborate to make joint funding, service-delivery, or long-range planning decisions.

The majority of direct services are provided at the community level through local government, private service providers, for-profit or nonprofit agencies and others. Every state agency has some type of relationship with local communities.

Primarily these relationships are based on funding either through direct pass-through funds or grants and contracts to local service providers. As a result, state/local relationships are often fragmented and complicated. Few communities have developed a comprehensive plan for young children that the state could use as a guide for funding and technical support.

The development of this initiative, which blends the responsibilities of two departments, is a major step in building a strong support system.

OUTCOME #1

Children and families are supported by state and community systems.

The following strategies are focused on building an ideal system of supports that reflects the comprehensive needs of young children.

Suggested Strategies

1. Establish an interdepartmental budget planning process that identifies barriers and opportunities for sharing resources, and plots comprehensive services.
2. Link budget and funding to outcomes/strategies and develop a process to track funding and outcomes over time.
3. Educate state and community personnel about the state budget process.
4. Set concrete, measurable goals for child well-being and establish a performance accountability system for evaluating outcomes.

5. Develop an interdepartmental data/research plan that identifies data/research needs.
6. Establish and support methods to report/publish data for communities, the public, state/private agencies.
7. Provide technical assistance, resources, etc. to communities to develop comprehensive plans that address needs of young children and their families.
8. Develop a state process to support and assist communities with the implementation of local plans.
9. Establish an Early Childhood Collaboration Council to combine or coordinate the work of existing committees; establish formal partnerships between the state, communities, private agencies and businesses; and develop recommendations, action plans or policies for state and local consideration.
10. Establish formal mechanisms to sustain collaboration between departments at the program manager level and below and to integrate service planning efforts, and eliminate duplication of efforts.
11. Establish a formal structure for collecting information on and coordinating interdepartmental activities, grants, projects.
12. Establish state policies and procedures that model family-friendly work policies and practices, professional development in the field of Early Childhood Education, and best practices for children.
13. Formalize state policy and goals for children birth through age 8 by expanding the existing State Board of Education & Early Development goals.
14. Focus on prevention as a state priority by establishing funding strategies dedicated to prevention.
15. Establish processes and timelines for initiative completion and establish a schedule for review, revision and reporting on progress of the initiative.
16. Report on indicators of child well-being.



INDICATORS

The following indicators will be used to measure progress and gauge success in achieving outcomes:

- ◆ Development of inter-agency work plan
- ◆ Development and implementation of inter-agency budget
- ◆ Implementation and publication of interdepartmental indicators of child well-being

Next steps to establishing support systems

*What can my
community do?*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

*What can my
agency/business do?*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What can I do?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

IN CONCLUSION AND INTO THE FUTURE

Children are our state's greatest natural resource. Families, communities and those who work on behalf of children, at every level, sincerely desire to do more and better work each day for children.

Why the focus on prenatal through age eight? This initiative focuses on young children because it is the best place to start—a touch point for children and families. Here we can begin the prevention and intervention work that can eliminate or mitigate future problems and reduce the need for costly remediation later. The focus on helping Alaska's children to be healthy and successful cannot begin too soon.

Building Blocks articulates many of the challenges faced by children and their families today and identifies outcomes and strategies which, if accomplished, could significantly improve the lives of many children.

The next step is ACTION by many people, in many places, for a sustained period of time. Families, communities and the government need to decide what they can do individually and collectively and do it.

The departments of Education & Early Development and Health and Social Services are committed to beginning now, using this plan as a framework, to develop joint workplans that are integrated and build upon each other's work and strengths. Grants will be written together, program plans and service delivery systems will be jointly designed and implemented and collaborative evaluation put into place to determine program and service effectiveness and efficiency.

Many individuals, representing diverse groups and opinions, provided input into the development of this initiative. They offered ideas, editing, support and encouragement.

These individuals and many more are invited to become full partners in its implementation. This is a work in progress and it will take the creative capacity and energy of everyone in Alaska to turn the initiative into programs and services that better serve Alaska's young children and improve their overall health and well-being.

We have begun the preparation...how the race is run and whether we win it on behalf of all the children depends on each of us. Please encourage your friends, family, business and professional colleagues and community groups to identify at least one thing they can do that will make a difference for children. Every effort and every person will make a difference. The children are counting on us—we must not let them down.





Next steps . . .

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEPS

Next steps . . .

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Education and Early Development
Department of Health and Social Services

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

Richard S. Cross, Commissioner
Karen Perdue, Commissioner

Response Form
For

Building Blocks

Continuing the Progress of Smart Start:
The Next Steps for Supporting Alaska's Young Children and Their Families

Please complete the following. We will use this information to communicate with you in the future.

Name _____ Occupation _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

Where did you receive your copy of **Building Blocks**? _____

Would you like to receive more information on **Building Blocks**? ___ Yes ___ No

Would you like to help in your community? ___ Yes ___ No

Which focus area of **Building Blocks** interests you most?

___ Assuring Maternal and Child Health

___ Supporting Healthy Stable Families

___ Enhancing Early Care and Education

___ Developing Supportive Neighborhoods and Communities

If you have a few moments, your response to the following questions will enhance our work:

- 1) Thinking of health and education needs of infants and young children up to age 8, what are the most critical needs in your community?
- 2) What, in your opinion, is your community currently doing to help young children? What more could be done?
- 3) Other Comments?

Please turn this form in at the end of the meeting or you may return it using this information:

Please FAX or mail to:
Carol Prentice, Collaborative Projects Coordinator
Dept. of Health and Social Services
PO Box 110610
Juneau, AK 99811-0610

FAX: (907) 586-1877
Phone: (907) 465-6420
Email: carol_prentice@health.state.ak.us

Thank you for taking time to share your ideas!

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Department of Health and Social Services
350 Main Street, #204; Juneau, AK 99811-0601
Phone: 907-465-3030; Fax: 907-465-3068
www.hss.state.ak.us



Department of Education & Early Development
801 W. 10th Street, #200, Juneau, AK 99801-1894
Phone: 907-465-2800; Fax: 907-465-4156
www.eed.state.ak.us

Senate Health, Education, and Social Services Committee

January 31, 2001

Department of Education and Early Development

Assessment Overview



Teaching and Learning Support

SB281 Mission: The mission of the Division of Teaching and Learning Support is to improve student performance.

Key Performance Measures

Measure: Percentage of students who meet the proficiency level in benchmark assessments in grades 3, 6, and 8
(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)

Current Status:

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Reading, Writing and Mathematics on Benchmark Examinations, Spring 2000

Grade	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
3	72	49	64
6	70	73	63
8	83	68	41

↑ What is this causing this?

Benchmark:

Benchmark examinations were administered for the first time in March of 2000. The State Board of Education and Early Development set the proficiency level for each grade. These proficiency levels are Advanced; Proficient; Below Proficient; and, Not Proficient. These data from the first administration in March 2000 will establish a baseline for measuring student performance. Proficiency is defined as the sum of students who scored at the Advanced and Proficient levels on the Benchmark exams.

**Spring 2000
 Benchmark Reading Exam Results**

	Not Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Total #
Grade 3	100-257	258-309	310-432	433-600	
% in Level	12	16	59	13	
Examinees					9,924
Grade 6	100-247	248-310	311-371	372-600	
% in Level	12	18	27	43	
Examinees					9,924
Grade 8	100-232	233-270	271-324	325-600	
% in Level	10	7	17	66	
Examinees					9,574

**Spring 2000
Benchmark Writing Exam Results**

	Not Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Total #
Grade 3	100-244	245-351	352-489	490-600	
% in Level	10	40	45	4	
Examinees					9,901
Grade 6	100-195	196-299	300-415	416-600	
% in Level	4	22	50	23	
Examinees					9,907
Grade 8	100-190	191-315	316-415	416-600	
% in Level	2	30	45	23	
Examinees					9,569

**Spring 2000
Benchmark Math Exam Results**

	Not Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Total #
Grade 3	100-253	254-321	322-400	401-600	
% in Level	12	24	36	28	
Examinees					9,894
Grade 6	100-290	291-328	329-398	399-600	
% in Level	23	13	35	28	
Examinees					9,879
Grade 8	100-272	273-373	374-460	461-600	
% in Level	17	42	33	8	
Examinees					9,508

Background and Strategies:

State law requires a comprehensive system of student assessments including a developmental profile for students entering kindergarten or first grade, benchmark assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics at grades 3, 6, and 8, and passage of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam in order to receive a high school diploma beginning in 2002. The department has:

1. Provided school districts with state performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics at the appropriate grade levels.
2. Developed the benchmark examinations in reading, writing, and mathematics for grades 3, 6, and 8.
3. Provided professional development opportunities for standards based instruction.
4. Provided technical assistance to school districts in aligning curriculum to state standards.

The department is in the process of:

1. Working with school districts to develop programs that provide students with opportunities to learn in order to reach the state standards at the appropriate age/grade levels.
2. Developing intervention strategies to assist students that fail to meet standards or are at risk of failing to meet standards at the appropriate age/grade levels.
3. Working with school districts to target staff development and teacher in-service opportunities to support standards-based instruction and assessments.

4. Targeting federal grant dollars to support increased student performance in reading, writing, and mathematics.
5. Identifying a new norm-reference assessment, linked to Alaska performance standards that will be potentially administered at grades 4, 5, 7, and 9.

Measure: Percentage of students performing above the national average on state adopted norm-referenced tests

(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)

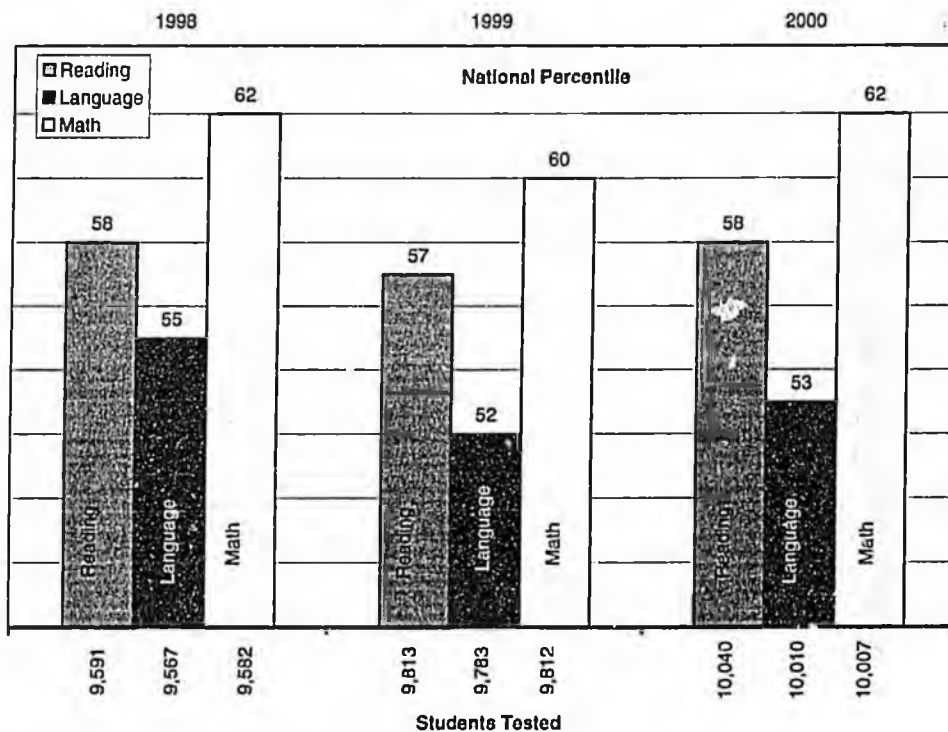
Current Status:

In school year 1999-00, 31.9% of Alaska's 4th graders scored in the top quartile in reading, 30.7% in the top quartile in language arts and 37.3% in the top quartile in mathematics.

Benchmark:

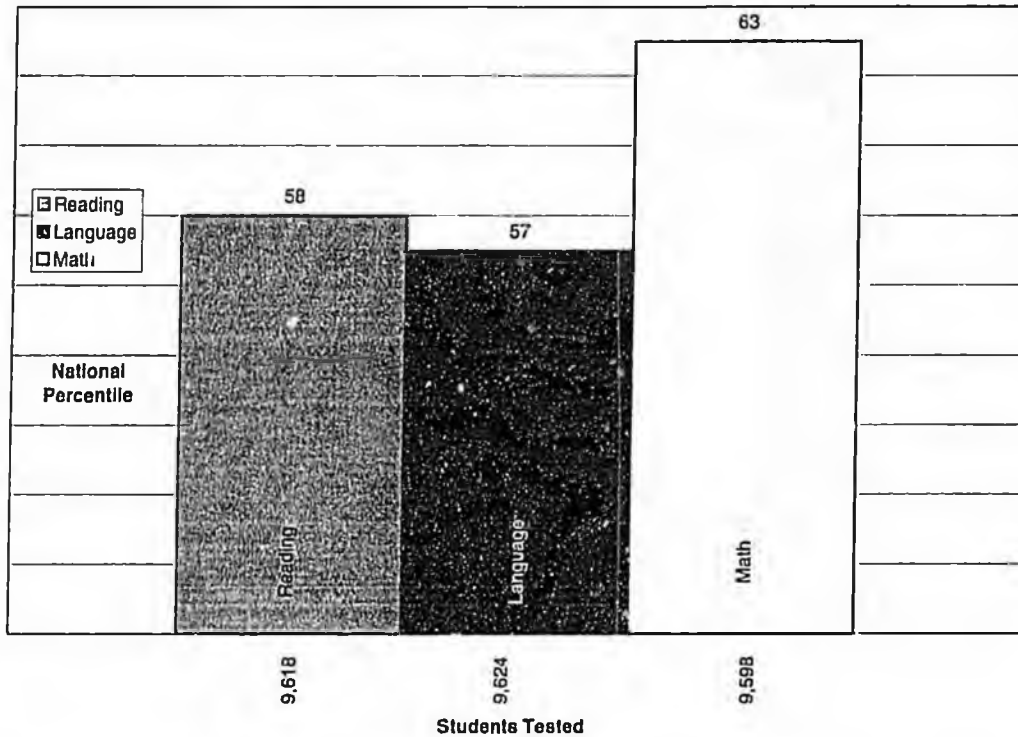
The chart below illustrates the performance of Alaska's 4th grade students on the norm-referenced test in school years 1998 through 2000.

CAT/5 - Grade 4



*In the 1999-2000 school year the department changed the CAT/5 from grade 8 to 7 because of the implementation of the Benchmark exam at grade 8. The following chart illustrates the 7th grade results.

**CAT/5 - Grade 7
2000**



Background and Strategies:

The department has used the CAT/5 norm-referenced test for the past 5 years. The current contract will expire in June of 2001 and the department will seek competitive proposals for a new norm-referenced test to be used for school year 2000-2001 and beyond. The new contract will solicit proposals for norm-referenced tests at grade 4, 5, 7 and 9. The addition of two new norm-referenced tests at grades 5 and 9 will provide a transition to an assessment system with capabilities not now available. Under the new system, students will be assessed each year from grades 4 to 10 using a combination of Benchmark, HSGQE and norm-referenced tests, which will allow for a measure of student academic growth from year-to-year. The ability to track student growth will allow the department to implement in 2002, a school rating system that will assign a designation of distinguished, successful, deficient or in-crisis to each public school in the state as required by AS 14.03.123.

Measure: Percentage of students who pass the state high school graduation-qualifying exam
(Developed jointly with Legislature in FY2001.)

Current Status:

Percent of enrolled students passing the first or second administration of the high school graduation-qualifying exam:

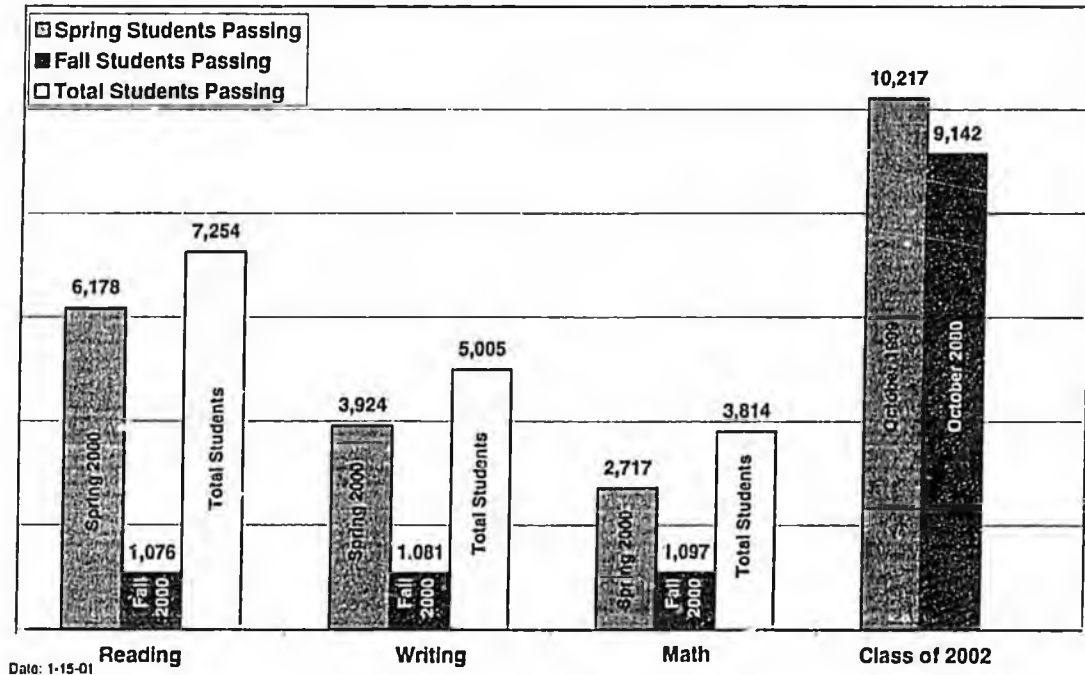
- Reading - 79%
- Writing - 55%
- Mathematics - 42%

Benchmark:

The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination is completed and was administered for the first time in March of 2000 and again in October of 2000. The State Board of Education & Early Development set the proficiency level for the exam. These data from the first administration of the graduation-qualifying exam will establish the baseline for

measuring student performance for the class of 2002. The exam will be offered in October and March of each school year. Students are eligible to take the exam for the first time in the spring of their sophomore year.

**High School Class of 2002
Number of Students Passing the HSGQE**



Background and Strategies:

State law requires a comprehensive system of student assessments including a developmental profile for students entering kindergarten or first grade, benchmark assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics at grades 3, 6, and 8, and passage of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam in order to receive a high school diploma beginning in 2002. The department has:

1. Provided school districts with state performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics.
2. Developed the graduation qualifying examination in reading, writing, and mathematics.
3. Provided professional development opportunities for standards based instruction.
4. Provided technical assistance to school districts in aligning curriculum to state standards.

The following pages contain Year 2000 Alaska State Assessment Results for grades 3, 6, and 8, and the high school graduation qualifying examination by school district:

Year 2000 Alaska State Assessment Results - READING

District	Spring 2000						Spring+Fall 2000	Oct. 1, 2000
	Grade 3 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 3 Tested	Grade 5 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 6 Tested	Grade 8 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 8 Tested	High School % Passed	Grade 11 Enrollment
Alaska Gateway	71	44	48	40	68	40	81	32
Aleutian Region	57	7	60	5	71	7	75	4
Aleutians East	55	29	43	23	92	26	65	26
Alyeska Central	93	15	89	18	92	34	24	110
Anchorage	75	3807	74	3863	88	3539	85	3303
Annette Island	80	25	66	27	67	30	82	22
Bering Strait	33	127	25	143	41	113	45	84
Bristol Bay	69	16	81	21	95	20	100	18
Chatham	62	21	59	22	41	22	92	12
Chignach	75	12	77	9	85	14	50	10
Copper River	84	55	68	53	89	60	75	55
Cordova	86	35	90	42	92	36	96	24
Craig	74	35	76	30	85	20	55	38
Della/Greely	70	41	79	77	86	64	49	59
Denali	92	24	76	29	97	30	100	27
Dillingham	67	42	50	48	82	39	84	37
Fairbanks	84	1254	77	1155	88	1203	93	943
Galena	80	194	85	197	95	176	74	186
Haines	87	23	82	32	79	29	74	35
Hoonah	64	11	45	20	50	10	83	24
Hydaburg	51	8	20	5	60	10	27	11
Iditarod Area	53	38	44	41	53	44	44	32
Juneau	79	408	73	409	90	457	87	437
Take	64	11	66	12	76	21	67	9
Kashunamiut	45	22	24	21	50	22	31	16
Kenai Peninsula	78	725	78	793	89	774	81	875
Ketchikan	85	184	80	185	85	203	100	156
Klawock	61	23	31	13	92	13	50	16
Kodiak Island	64	237	75	221	80	184	77	213
Kuspuk	48	33	30	34	34	38	47	32
Lake & Peninsula	46	41	35	37	69	39	41	22
Lower Kuskokwim	37	246	27	255	45	225	47	176
Lower Yukon	29	171	24	149	36	117	35	74
Mat-Su	80	973	78	952	88	1033	73	1129
Mt. Edgecumbe	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	76	90
Nenana	86	57	82	44	83	47	40	78
Nome	55	71	55	47	78	52	77	39
North Slope	50	185	40	130	58	149	49	120
Northwest Arctic	41	197	25	191	42	144	32	108
Pelican	80	5	0	2	100	0	100	3
Petersburg	88	51	88	61	91	65	100	60
Pribilof	54	13	78	9	74	19	80	10
Saint Mary's	27	15	50	12	66	9	56	9
Sitka	81	115	75	131	88	108	76	120
Skagway	89	9	100	7	100	6	100	11
Southeast Island	89	17	70	20	78	18	85	27
Southwest Region	27	62	24	67	42	50	26	42
Tanana	75	8	29	7	66	3	88	8
Unalaska	95	19	73	26	91	23	100	20
Valdez	84	56	62	76	92	82	100	48
Wrangell	89	34	86	43	88	49	100	27
Yakutat	100	11	77	9	100	10	69	16
Yukon Flats	37	27	22	23	53	15	44	18
Yukon/Koyukuk	40	35	41	44	63	40	50	24
Yupit	11	36	3	29	19	22	12	26

Year 2000 Alaska State Assessment Results - WRITING

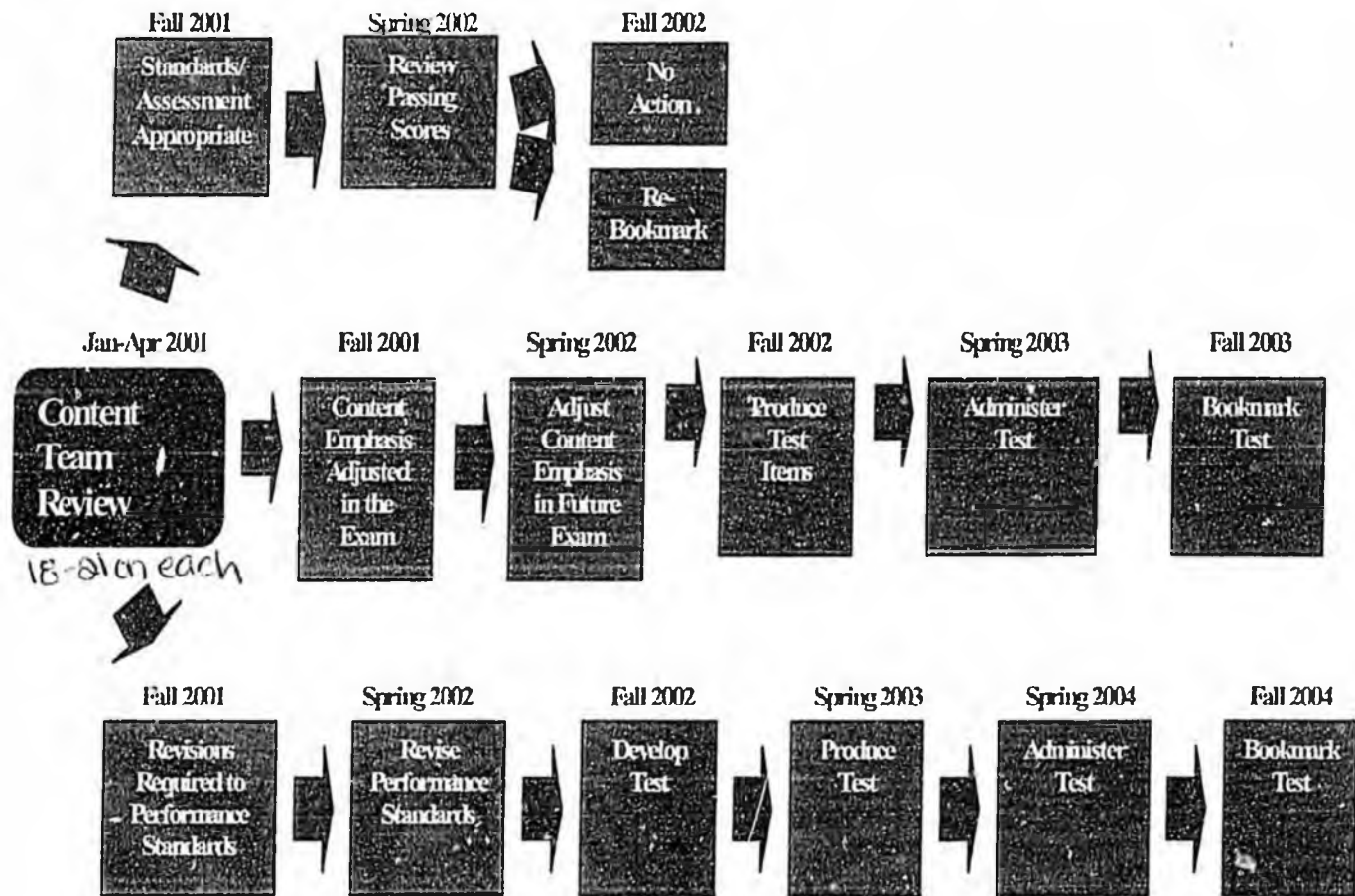
District	Spring 2000						Spring+Fall 2000	Oct. 1, 2000
	Grade 3 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 3 Tested	Grade 6 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 6 Tested	Grade 8 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 8 Tested	High School % Passed	Grade 11 Enrollment
Alaska Gateway	44	45	48	40	43	40	34	32
Aleutian Region	0	7	40	5	43	7	25	4
Aleutians East	28	29	61	23	58	26	31	26
Alyeska Central	53	15	89	18	73	33	14	110
Anchorage	53	3809	76	3864	72	3542	58	3303
Annette Island	38	24	58	26	49	31	36	22
Bering Strait	28	126	39	145	26	113	26	84
Bristol Bay	19	16	71	21	90	20	83	18
Chatham	38	21	63	22	32	22	50	12
Chugach	75	12	66	9	71	14	50	10
Copper River	61	54	63	52	76	59	55	55
Cordova	75	35	88	41	69	36	67	24
Craig	40	35	80	30	65	10	47	38
Delta/Greely	52	42	73	75	74	64	31	59
Denali	46	24	79	29	75	31	63	27
Dillingham	33	42	46	48	56	40	54	37
Fairbanks	58	1228	81	1142	72	1129	61	943
Galena	49	195	79	196	75	177	42	186
Haines	78	23	84	32	48	29	54	35
Hoonah	27	11	40	20	40	10	54	24
Hydaburg	25	8	25	4	30	10	0	11
Iditarod Area	23	38	51	41	48	44	25	32
Juneau	52	408	73	409	71	460	62	437
Take	27	11	75	12	43	21	33	9
Kashunamiut	40	25	43	21	17	23	6	16
Kenai Peninsula	51	723	79	794	70	772	54	875
Ketchikan	53	185	80	183	61	199	71	156
Klawock	34	23	23	13	78	14	25	16
Kodiak Island	45	236	77	223	63	182	53	213
Kuspuk	30	33	32	35	21	38	28	32
Lake & Peninsula	20	41	38	37	44	39	27	22
Lower Kuskokwim	23	249	35	255	33	227	34	176
Lower Yukon	21	172	33	149	24	121	15	74
Mat-Su	50	974	80	952	72	1029	50	1129
Mt. Edgecumbe	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	62	90
Nenana	51	61	87	47	68	47	28	78
Nome	28	70	58	48	56	53	26	39
North Slope	32	184	51	130	47	130	28	120
Northwest Arctic	29	192	32	186	29	144	13	108
Pelican	20	5	0	2	100	3	67	3
Petersburg	56	52	90	61	76	64	80	60
Pribilof	46	13	67	9	58	19	70	10
Saint Mary's	7	15	54	13	44	9	22	9
Sitka	55	115	77	130	75	109	55	120
Skagway	66	9	100	7	100	6	91	11
Southeast Island	59	17	70	20	61	18	59	27
Southwest Region	12	60	31	67	25	52	12	42
Tanana	25	8	29	7	33	3	50	8
Unalaska	37	19	82	27	82	22	100	20
Valdez	63	56	78	76	81	82	88	48
Wrangell	47	34	84	43	86	49	59	27
Yakutat	55	11	78	9	70	10	38	16
Yukon Flats	12	26	37	22	33	15	17	18
Yukon/Koyukuk	23	35	43	42	37	43	13	24
Yupit	9	34	11	28	14	22	15	26

Year 2000 Alaska State Assessment Results - MATHEMATICS

District	Spring 2000				Spring+Fall 2000		Oct. 1, 2000	
	Grade 3 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 3 Tested	Grade 6 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 6 Tested	Grade 8 % Prof./Adv.	Grade 8 Tested	High School % Passed	Grade 11 Enrollment
Alaska Gateway	57	46	43	38	28	40	31	32
Aleutian Region	28	7	67	3	29	7	25	4
Aleutians East	52	29	59	22	27	26	15	26
Alyeska Central	73	15	61	18	36	33	7	110
Anchorage	67	3813	67	3863	43	3531	45	3303
Annette Island	47	26	40	25	13	31	5	22
Bering Strait	33	123	20	143	6	110	24	84
Bristol Bay	50	16	67	21	55	20	50	18
Chatham	67	21	41	22	23	22	25	12
Chugach	84	12	77	9	36	14	30	10
Copper River	75	53	55	51	36	59	49	55
Cordova	83	35	81	41	53	36	46	24
Craig	63	35	74	31	35	20	26	38
Delta/Creely	54	41	62	76	50	60	25	59
Denali	62	24	71	28	55	31	67	27
Dillingham	57	42	37	48	43	40	19	37
Fairbanks	73	1222	65	1131	39	1171	46	943
Galena	66	192	63	195	38	173	29	186
Haines	95	23	84	32	52	29	46	35
Hoonah	54	11	45	20	40	10	38	24
Hydaburg	25	8	34	3	0	10	0	11
Iditarod Area	44	37	41	40	34	44	19	32
Juneau	79	409	70	407	52	456	58	437
Kenai	27	11	25	12	38	21	22	9
Kashunamiut	36	22	33	21	4	23	0	16
Kenai Peninsula	69	727	70	792	46	768	45	875
Ketchikan	77	183	75	185	40	195	51	156
Klawock	65	23	15	13	35	14	13	16
Kodiak Island	55	236	63	223	27	182	34	213
Kuspuk	40	32	32	35	13	37	16	32
Lake & Peninsula	32	41	27	37	21	39	18	22
Lower Kuskokwim	42	248	28	256	11	226	19	176
Lower Yukon	25	171	17	147	7	123	16	74
Mat-Su	72	977	67	948	41	1027	39	1129
Mt. Edgecumbe	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	38	90
Nenana	61	62	69	47	38	47	15	78
Nome	38	68	40	45	19	52	23	39
North Slope	61	184	39	129	18	149	19	120
Northwest Arctic	34	194	30	190	10	136	8	108
Pelican	60	5	0	2	66	3	33	3
Petersburg	86	52	76	62	48	65	65	60
Pribilof	28	14	44	9	21	9	40	10
Saint Mary's	33	15	46	13	33	9	22	9
Sitka	75	115	65	131	44	109	46	120
Skagway	100	9	72	7	67	6	64	11
Southeast Island	59	17	60	20	28	18	33	27
Southwest Region	31	62	33	68	22	51	5	42
Tanana	76	8	38	8	0	3	25	8
Unalaska	69	19	54	26	53	21	90	20
Valdez	75	56	74	76	52	82	69	48
Wrangell	91	34	89	43	63	49	59	27
Yakutat	91	11	67	9	40	10	38	16
Yukon Flats	31	26	30	20	0	15	6	18
Yukon/Koyukuk	54	35	31	40	14	44	8	24
Yupik	12	34	0	29	4	20	0	26

Alaska Standards-Based Assessment Initiative

FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUOUS RENEWAL



History of Alaska School Reform Since 1991

June 1991

Governor Walter J. Hickel directs the newly appointed State Board of Education and Commissioner of Education Jerry Covey to develop a plan to improve Alaska's system of public schools.

November 1991

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission, composed of 21 prominent Alaskans appointed by Governor Hickel, meets for first time. The Commission identifies 10 broad areas of educational concerns and asks the Governor and State Board of Education to appoint more than 100 Alaskans from outside and inside the educational system to make recommendations in each of the areas. The reform movement becomes known as Alaska 2000 (AK2K).

January 1992

The 10 committees of Alaskans meet for the first time.

October 1992

The State Board of Education approves AK2K recommendations, including developing student academic standards. AK2K becomes Alaska's major school reform initiative.

December 1992

The State Board proposes a regulation that sets a goal for schools to provide students with "a working knowledge of English, mathematics, science, geography, history, skills for a healthy life, government and citizenship, fine arts, technology and world languages." The regulation takes effect June 24, 1993. (4 AAC 04.030)

February 1993

At the direction of the State Board, the Standards and Assessment Oversight Committee meets for first time to set direction for development of student standards. The State Board commits to developing content standards—broad statements of what our students should know and be able to do—in 10 core subject areas: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Geography, Government and Citizenship, History, Skills for a Healthy Life, Arts, World Languages and Technology.

October 1993

The State Board asks the public to comment on proposed voluntary content standards in math, science and English/language arts. Public hearings are held in 14 communities around Alaska. Public hearings are held over Legislative Teleconference Centers in dozens of additional communities. As a result of strong public comment, the state board holds a second round of public hearings. Standards are adopted in 1994 and take effect on January 4, 1995.

September 1994

The State Board asks public to comment on proposed standards in history, geography, government and health. Board holds hearings in six communities and teleconferenced hearings in dozens of other communities. State Board adopts standards on November 29, 1994. Regulations take effect July 26, 1995.

December 1994

Governor Knowles takes office, appoints a new State Board, which in turn appoints Commissioner Holloway, effective March 13, 1995.

June 1995

The State Board asks the public to comment on proposed content standards in world languages and technology. Board takes written testimony and adopts them on October 24, 1995. Regulations take effect March 28, 1996.

April-October 1996

Commissioner Holloway builds the Alaska Quality Schools Initiative (QSI), which ends up with four major strands: High Student Academic Standards and Assessments; Quality Professional Standards; Family, School, Business and Community Network; and School Excellence Standards. The QSI replaces AK2K as Alaska's major school reform initiative. QSI builds upon AK2K and takes school reform to a new level of accountability.

October 1996

Governor Knowles, ARCO President Ken Thompson and Commissioner of Education Holloway invite school and community leaders to Girdwood for the Knowles Administration's first Education Summit. At the conclusion of the summit, Commissioner Holloway commits to developing in Alaska a results-based system of education based on standards. This is her QSI plan.

Spring 1997

The Legislature passes, and Governor Knowles reluctantly signs, the secondary pupil competency testing law, which becomes AS 14.03.075. The new law requires all high school students to pass an exit exam in order to receive a diploma. Those who do not pass get a certificate of attendance. Effective date is January 1, 2002. The governor announces that a single exit exam at the

conclusion of 12 years of schooling is not a good idea and he will introduce legislation in 1998 that will implement a complete school system of accountability based on measurable student performance standards.

March 1998

The Department contracts with Council for Basic Education (CBE) to review Alaska's proposed reading, writing and math performance standards. Department makes changes to standards as recommended by CBE.

June 1998

The Governor signs into law Senate Bill 36, which becomes AS 14.07.020(b). The new law sets a requirement for the department to develop student performance standards in reading, writing and mathematics and to develop benchmark exams at designated grade levels. The QSI portion of SB 36 required the following:

- **Academic Standards**—Mandated the State Board of Education to adopt academic standards in reading, writing and math at four levels; ages 5-7; 8-10; 11-14 and 15-18. The high school and benchmark exam questions are to measure whether students have met the standards.
- **Alaska Benchmark Examinations**—Mandated the department to assess students at the 3rd, 6th and 8th grades beginning in March 2000, in order for schools to check whether students are meeting the reading, writing and math standards and are on course to pass the high school exam.
- **Developmental Profile**—Required schools to complete a developmental profile on all entering kindergarten and first grade students.
- **QSI Grant**—Gave school districts additional dollars through the Quality Schools Grant program if they establish plans to adopt standards, intervene with additional services for children who are not meeting the standards, and train educators how to teach students in a results-based system of public education. The QSI Grant program became part of the state's school funding program.
- **School Designators**—Requires the State Board to develop an annual system of rating schools, and designate each school by August 2002 in one of the four categories, *distinguished*, *successful*, *deficient*, and *in crisis*. The categories are to be based on a school's student test scores and other indicators of student performance.
- **School Report Cards**—Requires each school to annually report specific information about student performance to their communities and the State of Alaska beginning July 1, 2000. The information required includes school

accreditation status, results of norm-referenced achievement tests, results of state standards-based assessments in reading, writing and mathematics, description of student, parent, community and business involvement in student learning, and rates of student attendance, K-8 retention, grade 7-12 dropout and graduation. The department is required to issue its first school-by-school report card on January 15, 2001.

June 1998

The Department of Education establishes the elements of the QSI law as the department's key priorities.

July 1998

The Education Commission of the States submits a partial review of Alaska's proposed performance standards in reading, writing and math. The review is favorable.

September 1998

The State Board adopts by motion (not as a regulation) the student employability standards as an eleventh content standard.

January 1999

State Board adopts by motion (not as a regulation) student performance standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

March 1999

Benchmark exams for grades 3, 6, and 8 and high school exams are field tested statewide. State Board mandates all sophomores to take the exam.

September 1999

Public schools complete first developmental profiles of kindergarten and first grade students.

September 1999

State Board adopts in regulation performance standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The same regulation removes content standards from regulation and readopts them by reference in the publication *Alaska Standards: Content and Performance Standards for Alaska Students*. The board also adopts by reference the employability content standards.

February 2000

The School Designator Committee begins series of meetings to recommend elements of a system to rate schools as distinguished, successful, deficient and in crisis.

March 2000

State Board adopts Alternate Performance Standards and the Student Cultural Standards.

March 2000

The first administration of the high school and benchmark exams is conducted statewide. At the direction of the State Board, all 10th grade students are required to take the high school exam.

April 2000

Alaska content standards are measured in a group process against NAEP standards. Alaska's standards match well with NAEP standards.

June 2000

Commissioner Cross announces he will recommend to the State Board a two-stage "phased in" approach to the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam. Under the phase in, the Class of 2002 and Class of 2003 would be held to a lower passing score than Class of 2004 onward, when a higher passing score would take effect.

June 2000

Committees meet to recommend passing scores for high school exam.

August 2000

Committees meet to adopt proficiency scores for benchmark exams.

September 2000

State Board adopts passing scores for high school exam. Phase in idea dropped.

September 29-October 1

About 350 School board presidents, school administrators, some of the state's best teachers and business and community leaders convened at Girdwood for Education Summit 2000, the second education summit of the Knowles Administration. The purpose was to develop strategies to help more children meet the state's new higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Teams from school districts statewide examined the performance of their districts' students on state tests and learned how analyze score data and to improve schools to better meet the learning needs of students.

October 2000

The second administration of the high school exam commences statewide.

December 2000

The State Board adopts proficiency cut scores for the benchmark exams.

December 2000

The State Board adopts a resolution urging the Legislature to change the effective date for the high stakes portion of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination, from January 1, 2002 to 2006. The Board's plan would continue the administration of the test.

December 2000

As the next step toward fulfilling the goals of the Quality Schools Initiative, Gov. Knowles appoints 11 Alaskans to an Education Funding Task Force. The task force will recommend to the governor and the State Board in February 2001 a five-year funding plan to fulfill the goals of the QSI and improve education in Alaska.

January 2001

Governor Knowles announces in his State of the State address that he supports the State Board's December 2000 resolution and that he urges the Legislature to amend the law for the high stakes portion of the high school exam to take effect 2006.

January 2001

By law, the first school-by-school Report Card to the Public is scheduled to be delivered to the Legislature and the public.

January 2001

Committees begin meeting to start a continuous renewal of Alaska's standards-based assessment system. Committees begin with a review of the high school standards and high school exam. The meetings are expected to conclude in April. The renewal process for benchmark exams will follow.