

**02/20/13
PRESENTATION:
CENTER FOR
ALASKA
EDUCATION
POLICY RESEARCH**

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UAA Center for Alaska Education Policy Research

UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

WHAT IS CAEPR?

Founded in 2010 as a division of the Institute of Social and Economic Research, the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) addresses the need for Alaska-specific research through supporting, conducting and disseminating high-quality research on critical education policy issues such as educational access, equity and excellence across early childhood, primary, secondary, higher and adult education.

CAEPR'S CORE VALUES ARE:

- The center supports objective, non-partisan, rigorous research
- The center's work is conducted in partnership and collaboration with faculty from across the university system, key stakeholders and policymakers
- The center promotes community engagement by connecting researchers with policymakers and stakeholders, and by making research accessible to multiple audiences

WHAT IS EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH

Education policy research is a broad and evolving field of study. There are a number of topic areas and research approaches that fall under this moniker, from economic studies, including cost-benefit or "production function" research to organizational studies, looking at how policies are implemented to evaluation studies, assessing the impact and outcomes of policies. Education policy research can address how policies are developed and the relationship of politics to policies or policies to practice. It also can inform policymaking, answering questions decision-makers have about what is currently happening, why it is happening, and what might be needed to address a particular challenge.

CENTER ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Working with an advisory board to identify and address the most important educational policy issues facing Alaska.
 - Conducting research on key education policy issues with researchers around the state, as well as from outside Alaska, including Education Northwest and the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado.
 - Analyzing education policy initiatives at the local, state and national levels.
 - Building research capacity throughout Alaska through mini-grant funding, proposal development assistance and methodology consultations.
 - Doing "rapid response" research for time-sensitive requests from federal, state and local policymakers.
 - Sponsoring undergraduate researchers to assist with projects through the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship at UAA and the First Alaskans Institute summer internship program.
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CAEPR'S ADVISORY BOARD

The CAEPR 2012-2013 Advisory Board includes representatives from the following groups and organizations:

Alaska Commissioner of Education and
Early Development

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary
Education

Alaska Council of School Administrators

Alaska Native Educators Association

Alaska State House and Senate Education
committees

Association of Alaska School Boards

Association of ANCSA Regional
Corporations

Best Beginnings

First Alaskans Institute

NEA-Alaska

Office of the Governor

Private industry

University of Alaska

The University of Alaska's three deans of education serve as CAEPR's steering committee to ensure that the center is effectively building education policy research capacity across the university.



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2012-2013 Work Plan for FY2013 Legislative Appropriation

UAA's Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) based our work plan for the funding received from the Alaska Legislature for FY 2013 on the intent language attached to it. That language reads as follows:

It is the intent of the legislature that \$250,000 of this appropriation be used to evaluate Alaska's education system and make recommendations aimed at increasing student achievement. The evaluation should not focus on funding, except that it may recommend redirection of how a district is investing existing funding. The evaluation parameters should include instructional programs, including comprehensive curriculum, instructional materials, and effectiveness of professional development and instructional practices; evaluation of vocational and college preparedness tracks for education; district efficiency, including efficiency of district administration; instructional leadership, including instructional accountability; teacher retention and tenure; effectiveness and efficiency of remote-delivery of education; efficiency and effectiveness of state professional development; barriers to success that are within school district control, in particular with regard to fourth- and eighth grade reading and mathematics scores on national examinations. It should also examine the length of the school year, length of school day, and instructional time per day. The evaluation will also provide a comparison of Alaska's districts' practices to national practices on each of these parameters, including a comparison of Alaskan standards and expectations to those of other states.

We are engaged in five projects laid out below. At the end of this fiscal year we will assess what we have learned in order to move forward on other issues of interest to the legislature. This work plan does not include CAEPR projects funded through contracts and grants from other state, federal and private sources.

1) "State of the State in Education"

Timeline Research in progress, report to be produced in March 2013

This report will address the current state of K-12 education in Alaska and place Alaska within the national context. We will look at a number of issues including:

- a) The policy context, including content standards, the school calendar, the length of the school day, year, required professional development, graduation requirements, the Alaska Performance Scholarship, the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam, Alaska's school finance system, and demographic data on the student population
- b) Accountability and school reform, such as student achievement and education outcomes on standardized measures (e.g., standardized test scores, graduation and dropout rates) at the state level, for subgroups and for different regions, comparisons of state data with national averages, and efforts to improve student and school performance
- c) Recruiting and retaining high quality teachers
- d) Issues in education in rural Alaska and for Alaska Natives

2) Statewide Survey of Teachers

Timeline: Survey under development, to be launched in March 2013

This will be a comprehensive look at the factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay in their schools/districts or to leave. We are developing the instrument with input from key individuals and organizations including faculty in the schools and colleges of education in Alaska (UA and APU), NEA- Alaska, superintendents, and others.

Teachers will be asked about issues such as:

- a) Their perceptions of leadership in their school
- b) Their relationships with parents and community
- c) Salary, benefits and financial incentives to stay in their school
- d) Mentoring and professional development

In fall 2013, CAEPR will match data on teacher employment to see which teachers who participated in the survey continued to teach in Alaska and in their same school, and which do not, and analyze the relationship between teacher survey responses and work outcomes.

3) Educator Supply & Demand Report

Timeline: Research in progress. Report to be produced in April 2013

This will be a comprehensive update of data on teacher and administrator supply, demand and turnover, including:

- a) A literature review on factors influencing teacher retention and turnover
- b) Data on the number of teachers and administrators prepared by institutions in-state versus coming in from outside Alaska
- c) Teacher and administrator turnover rates by district
- d) A look specifically at the numbers and career pathways of Alaska Native teachers and administrators

4) Study of recent graduates of UA programs

Timeline: Completed.

Donna Gail Shaw has completed the study "Why Aren't They Teaching? A Study of Why Some University of Alaska Teacher Education Graduates Aren't in Classrooms". We are in the process of putting together a policy brief on this study, and it will be available shortly. A summary report is available now, by request.

5) Study of the cost of teacher turnover in Alaska

Timeline: Initial study design being drafted. Research will be conducted in March -April 2013, and a report will be completed in June 2013.

This project sets up a model for calculating the dollar-cost of teacher turnover in Alaska, and will be conducted in five districts, each representing a unique aspect of Alaska's educational landscape in regards to geographical and cultural place, varying levels of local, state, and federal funding, size and number of students served.



ASPRA Alliance Members



Organization	Name	Title
Alaska Assn. of Secondary School Principals	Cheryl Guyett	Principal
Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education	Diane Barrans Brian Rae	Executive Director Asst. Dir. for Research and Analysis
Alaska Council of School Administrators	Bruce Johnson	Executive Director
Alaska Department of Education & Early Development	Brad Billings Mike Hanley Eric McCormick Les Morse	Director, Statewide System of Support Commissioner of Education Dir. of Assessment, Accountability, and Information Management Deputy Commissioner of Education
Alaska Native Educators Assn.	Nita Yurrlig Rearden	Board Member
Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development	James Merriner	Chair
Alaska State Legislature	Joe Thomas Kevin Meyer Alan Dick	Co-chair, Senate Education Comm. Co-chair, Senate Education Comm. Chair, House Education Comm.
Alice Galvin Consulting	Alice Galvin	Business Owner
Anchorage School District	Ed Graff Jane Stuart	Assoc. Superintendent Executive Dir., Assessment and Eval.
Assn. of ANCSA Regional Corp. Presidents/CEOs	Margie Brown	President/CEO, Cook Inlet Region, Inc.
Assn. of Alaska School Boards	Lon Garrison	President of Board of Directors and President of Sitka School Board
Assn. of Interior Native Educators (AINE)	Malinda Chase	Executive Director
Center for Alaska Education Policy Research	Diane Hirshberg Alexandra (Lexi) Hill	Director Research Associate
Cordova School District	Jim Nygaard	Superintendent
First Alaskans	Liz Medicine Crow	Director, Alaska Native Policy Center
Governor's Office	Mike Lesmann	Special Staff Assistant
Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools	Steve Atwater	Superintendent
Lower Kuskokwim Schools	Gary Baldwin	Superintendent
NEA Alaska	Ron Fuhrer	President
North Slope Borough School District	Peggy Cowan	Superintendent
Sitka School District	Steve Bradshaw	Superintendent
University of Alaska Southeast	Deborah Lo	Dean, School of Education
Yukon-Koyukuk Schools	Kerry Boyd	Superintendent

Note: Others will be added to the alliance at the suggestion of alliance members



Alaska State Policy Research Alliance (ASPRA)

The Alaska State Policy Research Alliance (ASPRA) seeks to increase the use of research evidence in addressing critical education issues and making policy decisions. ASPRA provides a forum for Alaska policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders to collectively examine evidence-based solutions to challenges such as preparing Alaska students for postsecondary success. A research alliance is a group of interested parties who agree to work together to learn more about specific educational concerns so that they can make sound decisions to improve outcomes. Research alliances define research questions, share data, conduct research, and use the results.

The goals of ASPRA are to:

- Create a shared research agenda to improve education for Alaska students
- Build common awareness and knowledge of research evidence about college and career readiness
- Increase the capacity of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED) staff to conduct high-quality research and to share the evidence with legislators and other stakeholders
- Increase the use of data and research in making education policy decisions

The alliance consists of policymakers and researchers from Alaska's K-12 and higher education system who make up ASPRA's core decision-making group. Policymakers include staff from EED, legislative education committee chairs and staffers, Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development members, and representatives from the governor's office. The advisory group for ASPRA includes education stakeholders across the state, such as district representatives, Alaska Native groups, professional associations, and business/community members.

In 2012, the alliance:

- Conducted research related to postsecondary options for Alaska students
- Developed templates, reports, and processes to provide data for policy decision making
- Held events on research evidence about college and career readiness, student postsecondary trajectories, and how to access data from the National Center for Education Statistics

In 2013, the alliance plans to:

- Define and select college- and career-ready indicators through a set of analytic support activities that identify key benchmarks
- Conduct data analyses to establish grade-level markers for college and career readiness
- Provide technical assistance activities to improve members' ability to conduct rigorous evaluations of state programs and policies and to inventory and assess data quality

ASPRA activities are supported with funding from the federal Institute of Education Sciences. There is no cost to the ASPRA membership for these activities and services.

For questions about ASPRA, please contact Terri Akey at Terri.Akey@educationnorthwest.org. For questions about REL Northwest please contact Christopher Mazzeo at Christopher.Mazzeo@educationnorthwest.org. Find out more at <http://educationnorthwest.org/rel-northwest/rel-research-alliances/aspra>.



REL Northwest Working in Alaska

As part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories, REL Northwest works with educators and policy-makers in our region to improve data and evidence use, particularly around these three key, regional priorities:

- Turning around low-performing schools
- Improving college and career readiness
- Promoting equitable and excellent outcomes for all students

Since 1966 Education Northwest has operated the REL for our region, providing research and technical assistance services to education stakeholders in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. These services are funded by the federal Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

What does REL Northwest do?

REL Northwest builds the capacity of practitioners and policymakers to identify, access, use, and apply data and research evidence to meet their goals. Along with the other nine RELs, REL Northwest seeks to develop a national knowledge base of reliable, actionable evidence to help improve student outcomes.

What is the major focus of REL Northwest's work?

REL Northwest's activities primarily center on facilitating the work of "research alliances," which are partnerships of educational organizations and stakeholders working together on a common problem or issue. The alliances define research questions, share data, conduct research, and use the results to address member problems and concerns. In addition to working with research alliances, we offer customized, research-based answers to educators' questions through our free Reference Desk service (educationnorthwest.org/askarel). And, we continue to inform education policy and practice in the Northwest by conducting and disseminating rigorous studies that address critical regional challenges.

What research alliance is REL Northwest working with in Alaska?

REL Northwest is working with the Alaska State Policy Research Alliance (ASPRA). Policymakers and researchers from Alaska's K-12 and higher education system make up ASPRA's core decision making group. Policymakers include staff from the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED), legislative committee chairs and staffers, Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development members, and representatives of the governor's office. The advisory group for ASPRA includes education stakeholders across the state, such as district representatives, Alaska Native groups, professional associations, and business/community members. This group aims to:

- Create a shared research agenda to improve education for Alaska students
- Build common awareness and knowledge of research evidence about college and career readiness
- Increase the capacity of EED staff to conduct high-quality research and to share the evidence with legislators and other education stakeholders
- Increase the use of data and research in making education policy decisions

We welcome suggestions for additional research alliances.

How can I find out more?

For more information, contact Deborah Davis, Deborah.Davis@educationnorthwest.org. To stay up-to-date on REL Northwest resources and services, go to <http://educationnorthwest.org/rel-northwest>.