

02/27/13  
REPORT ON  
TEACHER  
PREPARATION,  
RETENTION, AND  
RECRUITMENT BY  
THE BOARD OF  
REGENTS,  
UNIVERSITY OF  
ALASKA

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UNIVERSITY  
*of* ALASKA  

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*Many Traditions One Alaska*

## **Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools 2013**

Prepared for the 28<sup>th</sup> Alaska State Legislature

In Accordance with:

AS 14.40.190(b)

Source: Senate Bill 241, 25th Alaska State Legislature  
AN ACT

A report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the  
Board of Regents of the University of Alaska

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## Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools 2013

### Executive Summary

This report responds to AS 14.40.190(b), which requires the University of Alaska (UA) Board of Regents to report biennially to the Alaska State Legislature on university efforts to “attract, train and retain qualified public school teachers.” It describes the University of Alaska teacher education programs, provides data on teacher education graduates, discusses initiatives across the system to encourage more youth and adults to enter teaching, and describes efforts to mentor and support educators prepared both within and outside the UA system. It also describes some of the research being done on challenges in meeting the state’s needs and to attract, prepare, and retain educators for Alaska. The report then addresses a recent question the Legislature raised about why some of the UA teacher education graduates are not currently teaching in Alaska’s public schools.

- The three UA Schools and College of Education produced 242 new teachers in AY 2012. Fourteen of these were new special education teachers. In addition another 66 certified teachers earned special education endorsements.
- UA programs produced 80 principals and 34 counselors. 171 degrees were awarded in other educational areas such as superintendent certification, master teachers, educational technology, reading specialist and so forth.
- School districts continue to hire around 400 teachers each year from outside of Alaska.
- All three UA education programs engage in efforts to recruit and prepare more rural educators.
- The UA Schools and College of Education each run initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Alaska Native teachers.
- All of the UA Schools and College of Education offer programs that prepare new and practicing teachers from urban Alaska and outside the state for working in rural, remote and indigenous communities.
- The UA Statewide Office of K-12 Outreach also is engaged in efforts to recruit teacher candidates, provide professional development to current teachers and mentor new teachers from both within and outside Alaska.
- Education faculty across the three Schools and College of Education and researchers at the UAA Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) are conducting research on critical issues of practice and policy including studies of teacher evaluation, teacher turnover in rural and remote Alaska, and culturally responsive mathematics teaching.
- In response to legislators’ questions in 2012, the UA Schools and College of Education and CAEPR explored why many UA teacher education graduates were not teaching immediately after graduation. The major reasons include too many graduates competing for the limited positions in the state’s largest districts and too few willing or able to relocate to rural and remote schools where districts need more applicants. Other factors include: some graduates are less prepared to teach than others, more UA students choose to study elementary education than there are elementary teacher openings in schools, and too few choose hard-to-fill areas such as special education, secondary math, and secondary physical science.



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## Introduction

In 2008, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin signed into law AS 14.40.190(b), which requires the University of Alaska Board of Regents to present to the Alaska State Legislature a report that “describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers. The report must include an outline of the university’s current and future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training.” This report has been prepared annually since 2009; as of this iteration it will become a biennial report, provided to the legislature no later than day 30 of the regular session, per AS 14.40.190(b).

Teacher preparation is central to the mission of the University of Alaska (UA) system. In 2010, the UA Board of Regents endorsed the UA Teacher Education Plan (Appendix C) which established priorities for fulfilling this mission. Under President Gamble’s leadership, the system is engaged in an organizational change effort called the “Strategic Direction Initiative” (SDI). The SDI is aimed at increasing the UA system’s ability to meet the needs of students and the state and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. (<http://www.alaska.edu/shapingalaskasfuture/what-is-sdi/>)

The five Strategic Direction (draft) themes are:

- Student Achievement and Attainment
- Productive Partnerships with Alaska’s Schools
- Productive Partnerships with Alaska’s Public and Private Industries
- Research and Development to Build and Sustain Alaska’s Economic Growth
- Accountability to the People of Alaska

The theme “Productive Partnerships with Alaska’s Schools” is of particular importance for this report. The theme includes three broad areas: Alignment, Teachers for Alaska’s Schools, and Rural Education. Alignment includes issues around supporting and strengthening secondary preparation of students for postsecondary education; Teachers for Alaska’s Schools addresses recruitment of young people into the teaching profession, preparation of teachers in the UA system, and induction and mentoring for new teachers; and Rural Education looks at the role UA can play in improving the educational achievement of rural students so that, among other achievements, they qualify for the Alaska Performance Scholarship and do not need remediation once they enter the postsecondary system.

This report primarily covers the issues under “Teachers for Alaska’s Schools.” The report does describe some of the UA Schools and College of Education efforts around improving alignment and rural education, but the main focus here is on the topics of recruiting, preparing and supporting K-12 educators. After documenting some of the shortage areas in the Alaska teaching workforce and a discussion of difficulties in staffing Alaska’s schools, we describe the UA teacher education programs, provide data on teacher education graduates from the University of Alaska, discuss initiatives across the system to encourage more youth and adults to enter teaching, and describe

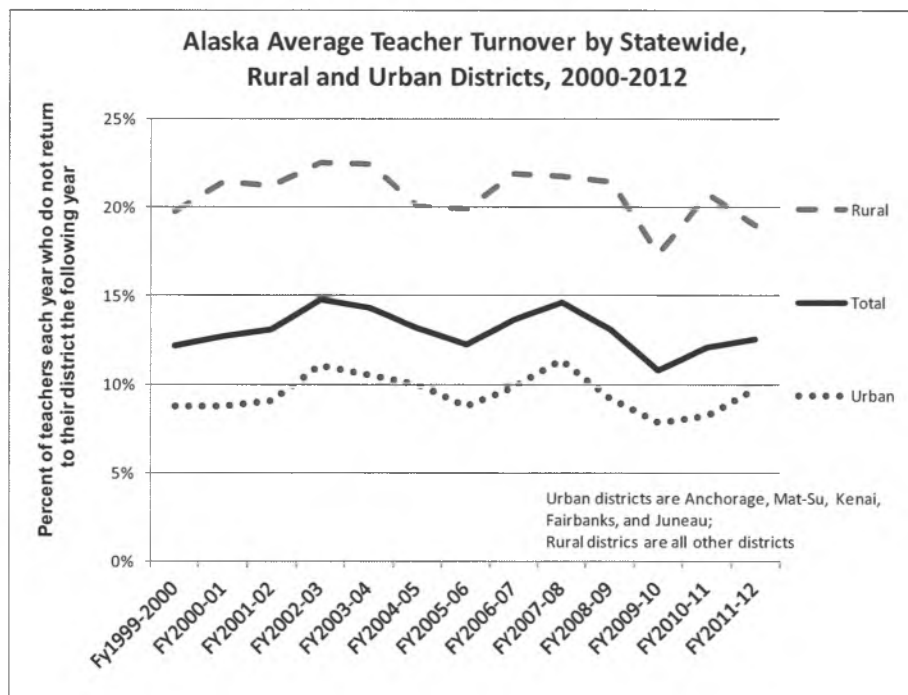
efforts to mentor and support educators prepared both within and outside the UA system. We also describe some of the research being done on the challenges of attracting, preparing, and retaining school teachers and educators for Alaska. Finally, the report addresses a recent question the Legislature raised about why some of the UA teacher education graduates are not teaching in the public schools. Subsequent reports will address additional specific issues of concern in depth, from the effectiveness of teacher induction and mentoring efforts across the state to the cost of teacher turnover.

## What are the needs and challenges in staffing Alaska's schools?

Staffing schools in Alaska has been a challenge since territorial days. The living conditions and remoteness of many communities, and the distance of the state from elsewhere in the United States have made it difficult to hire and retain educators—both from within Alaska and from outside the state. Educational institutions within the state have never produced enough teachers to meet the annual placement needs of schools. In this section, we address some of the contemporary issues around teacher preparation, recruitment and retention. A more complete discussion of these issues will be available in an upcoming report on teacher turnover, supply and demand from the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR).

### Teacher Turnover

As the chart below shows, turnover in rural Alaska school districts is a persistent problem. Although there has been a slight decline over the last decade, rural districts still average almost double the turnover of Alaska's five largest, urban districts—about 19% compared to just under 10% for the urban districts. Appendix A includes turnover numbers for each district each year from AY 1999-2000 to AY 2011-2012. The dip in turnover between 2008 and 2009 may be related to the nation's financial crisis; districts across the country were either not hiring or were laying off teachers, and this may have led teachers with jobs in Alaska to stay in those jobs longer than they might if they thought there were readily available options elsewhere.



The causes of the high teacher turnover are complex and varied. Among them are that teachers recruited from the Lower 48 are far from their homes and families; the remoteness of many rural communities is difficult for some; there are limited choices for housing and medical care in villages

and urban amenities (such as supermarkets, restaurants, and so on) are generally not available; teachers are not always prepared for the differences between their culture and that of the communities in which they teach; and there are difficulties associated with teaching in schools with a history of high poverty rates and low student achievement.

Districts across the state consistently report challenges recruiting and keeping special education teachers and related service providers such as occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists. Teacher data collected by the state each year provides information on special education teacher turnover. From the 2010-11 school year to the 2011-12 school year, about 13% of general education teachers did not return to a general education position in their district; but 21% of special education teachers did not return to a special education position in their district. In rural Alaska, special educator turnover was 31%, compared to 19% for teachers who were not in special education<sup>1</sup>.

Similar data is not available for related services positions, but in a 2009 survey of school districts about speech-language pathologists, districts reported contracting for those services rather than hiring for them because they could not compete with private sector wages and because there were not enough specialists available to hire. They reported difficulties finding even contract services within the state and in some cases contracted with firms in the lower 48, or used telepractice to provide services.

Teacher turnover is defined as the percent of teachers in a given year who do not return to teach the following year in their same district. This is a useful definition when we analyze ways that districts can better retain their teachers. However, when we consider district efforts to recruit new teachers, we need to look at how many teachers districts have to hire; that is, how many of a given year's teachers were not in the district the previous year. Two factors can make hiring and turnover numbers different. First, if teacher needs are changing (due to enrollment changes, budget constraints or other factors), then districts may have to hire more teachers (to fill new positions) or fewer (as positions are reduced) than the number that leave. The total number of Alaska public school teachers has both increased and decreased in recent years. Second, if teachers leave the classroom to go into administration, then districts have to hire new teachers to fill those positions. Alaska districts hire many of their administrators from within; Alaska's districts typically have to hire 50 to 100 teachers to replace those moving into administrative positions.

Each year, Alaska school districts recruit not only within Alaska, but at job fairs and universities across the country, both in collaboration with UA Alaska Teacher Placement (described below) and on their own. There is some research showing that teachers prepared in state are more likely to stay, especially in rural areas, but rural districts report being able to recruit only a small fraction of their teacher needs from Alaska teacher education programs. Each year, for the last three years, districts have hired just under 1100 teachers; about half of those (504 of 1085) have been experienced teachers, already in Alaska. Some (about 140) changed districts from the previous year, over 20% (about 220) have taught in Alaska public schools before but took one or more years

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished ISER analysis, EED certified staff accounting database

away; and some (about 140) are experienced teachers already in Alaska, but have not taught here before. Districts hired about 210 new teacher Alaskans – this includes both Alaska-prepared teachers and Alaskans who went to schools outside the state for their teacher preparation. This left districts still needing to hire about 370 teachers from out of state; about 40% of those already had one or more years in the classroom, and about 60% were new teachers.

Alaska School Districts' Teacher Hiring by Prior Alaska and Teaching Experience Average, FY2009-2012			
	Experienced teachers	New teachers	Total
Alaskans	504	211	715
Non-Alaskans	153	217	370
Total	658	428	1085

#### Induction and Mentoring for New Teachers

Districts have worked to recruit and retain effective teachers through improved induction and mentoring, loan forgiveness and other financial incentives, and professional development aimed at improving teacher effectiveness. These programs have had varying degrees of success over the years. Districts and the state have implemented a number of induction and mentoring programs to help prepare new-to-Alaska teachers for the challenges of teaching in Alaska, especially in rural Alaska. However, many of these initiatives have been funded through federal grants and are not sustained when the funding disappears. Also, there has not been systematic research on which models are most successful across the state. As is described below there is now a comprehensive evaluation of the Statewide Teacher Mentoring project underway; this will address some of the gaps in knowledge about what works in Alaska.

#### One Challenge in Recruiting Teachers from Within Alaska: The Pool of Potential Candidates

One reason Alaska has trouble “growing our own” is that too many of our students don’t graduate from high school, and of those who do too many don’t go on to college. While Alaska’s high school graduation rates have improved over the last decade, the state graduate rate is still in the bottom quarter of states (NCES Digest of Education statistics 2011, Table 113, averaged freshman graduation rates 1990-91 through 2008-09). Both the percent of our high school graduates who attend college and the percent who attend here in their home state are in the bottom few states. So for every one hundred ninth graders nationally, about 48 will enter college four years later; in Alaska only about 33 will do so. Finally once students enter college, they have numerous career choices, and teaching is not always the most attractive to them (see report summary for more discussion of teacher recruitment issues). Addressing the need to prepare our own teachers will take improvement in all of these measures.

## University of Alaska teacher preparation and retention efforts

### Teacher Preparation within the University of Alaska System

The University of Alaska system offers teacher preparation at all three Major Academic Units (MAUs) – Anchorage (UAA), Fairbanks (UAF), and Southeast (UAS), via both face-to-face and online/e-Learning formats<sup>2</sup>. All three universities offer programs that lead to elementary, secondary, and special education initial certification. UAA offers initial certification in early childhood education and in early childhood special education. All three universities also offer special education endorsements and certificates for teachers interested in moving into that area. Between the three campuses, students can complete many degree programs completely online, including (but not limited to) a bachelor of arts in elementary or special education, a master of arts in teaching, a master of education in educational leadership, and a master of education in special education.

In addition, between the three MAUs there are many programs for educators wishing to add endorsements to their licensure or obtain masters degrees or certificates in specialized areas, including (but not limited to) reading specialist and cross-cultural education masters. The majority of these programs are offered via e-learning. All three universities also offer professional development opportunities to educators across the state and beyond, many in collaboration with school districts or professional organizations.

UA and its faculty are committed to student-centered learning. Faculty model an individualized, learner-centered approach to education that they want candidates to use with their P-12 students. Candidates are given scaffolding and multiple opportunities to meet target expectations on course projects/assessments. Reasonable accommodations are made to support candidate learning; when appropriate, course projects (and coordinated field experiences) are individualized to meet candidate needs and interests. Coursework is intentionally designed to promote an interchange of practical knowledge for candidates who are often working in schools with few resources and infrequent support from outside agencies.

All students in University of Alaska teacher education programs must take the Praxis I and Praxis II exams. Students must pass the Praxis I (Pre-Professional Skills Test) with scores that meet or exceed state standards before they enter student teaching, and they must pass one or more Praxis II content area exams with scores that meet or exceed state standards in order to receive an institutional recommendation for state licensure. This helps ensure that University of Alaska

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<sup>2</sup> Online or e-learning courses are offered in a number of formats. The University of Alaska defines e-Learning as planned learning that predominantly occurs in situations where a student is not required to be in a predetermined location. Delivery may be by video conference, audio conference, correspondence, telecourses, satellite telecasts, via the Internet, CD-ROM, and/or video/audio tape. A course may be delivered entirely via e-Learning or by a hybrid of e-Learning and on-campus methods. eLearning may be asynchronous (such as a Blackboard course learning software-based courses that does not require large-group sessions with the instructor) or synchronous, where the class meets on a scheduled or regular basis with the instructor via videoconference, Internet-based software or audio conference.

teacher education graduates meet national standards for content knowledge in their areas of specialization.

All University of Alaska teacher education programs have received national accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Twenty-six separate programs within those schools and college are nationally recognized by their relevant Specialty Professional Associations (SPAs), thus ensuring that the programs and the institutions in which they operate meet or exceed national standards. NCATE is one of two organizations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an accrediting institution specific to teacher education and it currently represents over 3 million individuals. To meet the necessary standards for initial and advanced programs, education institutions engage in a self-study, followed by a rigorous information review and site visit.

To make sure that UA teacher preparation programs are meeting both the needs of school districts throughout the state and university expectations, the College and Schools engage in several program improvement activities. Mission statements and program outcomes are reviewed annually to ensure that classes and program offerings align with them. We also survey current and former students as well as administrators and mentor teachers about the quality of UA students and programs, and on whether or not graduates are prepared to handle the rigors of teaching or their other educational responsibilities. This information is used to help the Schools and College improve program offerings.

#### *Initiatives to Increase the Number of Alaska Native Educators*

The Schools and College of Education at the University of Alaska (UA) have a strong commitment to the preparation of Alaska Native and Native Alaskan students for the teaching field. This is supported by multiple program delivery formats including traditional on-site face-to-face teaching, e-learning formats incorporating many advanced tools, summer institutes where on-site experiences help build collegial relationships and on-site visits. For example, since 1972 UAF has offered a full BA in Elementary Education degree for students who are in rural communities and who want to stay in rural communities. Nearly all of the students who complete a degree while in their own villages stay and teach in their community or region. UAF also has a fulltime Rural Advisor position to support the rural students in their programs.

As noted before, all three MAUs offer post-baccalaureate programs to students in rural communities via online distance learning. UAF's post-baccalaureate curriculum is designed specifically to prepare graduates to teach in rural and urban contexts. The curriculum is culturally responsive and place-based so that students know how to make state and national standards and district curriculum requirements relevant in whatever context they are in. Many of their faculty have experience in rural areas and thus are able to make coursework relevant and meaningful for rural students.

The UAF School of Education recently housed an Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Program grant to increase Native Alaskan educators. It provided funding for a number of Alaska Natives to

complete teaching degrees; 18 candidates completed a teacher certification program, of whom 17 are teaching in Alaska schools.

As an outcome of discussions with the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) during the 2012 Summer Session at UAF, the School of Education (SOE) Elementary Education Program has been approved to offer ED 245 (Child Development) as dual credit course for RAHI students, starting Summer 2013.

This fall the UAF SOE entered into discussions with the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) on ways the district can work with its paraprofessionals to help them complete the education and degree requirements necessary for state teacher certification. The goal of this collaboration is to increase LKSD's teacher corps for its dual immersion program.

At UAS, the Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska Schools (PITAAS) program supports both teacher candidates and teachers who are working toward advanced degrees in the acquisition of strong academic skills and rich indigenous knowledge so that they can provide culturally relevant K-12 instruction. Eleven PITAAS students graduated in 2012.

The UAS Village Teacher program supports eleven Alaska Native students preparing to become reading specialists and nine who are preparing to become math specialists in their districts.

A partnership between the UAA College of Education (COE) and the Kashunamiut School District was formed in 2010 to support twelve paraprofessionals who are working toward their bachelor's degrees in elementary education. This partnership, known as the Chevak Teacher Education Initiative, embraces the concepts of inclusivity and culturally relevant teaching. Course work reflects both Western and Cup'ik cultures and philosophies. By December 2013, about half of the group will have earned their associates degrees. This initiative is providing important insights about the power of collaboration as an indigenous community, school and university come together to create a space that supports cultural and language revitalization. The UAA COE is currently developing expansions and refinements to the program based on research on the initiative as well as insights gained through the partnership and project.

#### *Preparing Alaskans as well as Educators from Elsewhere to Work in Rural Schools*

Elementary, Secondary and Special Education certification programs which are 100% distance based are offered so that students who currently reside in a remote community can earn a teaching certificate while remaining in their community. Because experience in the classroom is crucial to the preparation of good teachers, the teacher education programs at all three UA campuses devote a significant portion of their non-personnel budget to travel so that university faculty can supervise practicum and student teaching experiences. For example, UAF student teachers and school counseling interns are practicing in 25 sites throughout Alaska, ranging from Anaktuvuk Pass in the north to Thorne Bay and Ketchikan in the south, and all of these candidates need supervision. The cost for this can be quite considerable, but it is one the UA Schools and College of Education willingly support given the importance of preparing quality teachers (as well as counselors and

principals) for rural communities. We are currently compiling information on the costs associated with preparing an educator in Alaska, including the costs associated with rural practicum supervision; this information will be available later this spring.

University of Alaska Schools and College of Education offer students a minimum one week rural practicum experience. University faculty and staff arrange classroom placements, travel and accommodations for each student. This experience is typically arranged in conjunction with the job fair held in Anchorage each year. In this way teacher candidates are encouraged to think of the experience in terms of future employment. In addition, when they return to their home campus or on-line classes, students present projects completed during the rural practicum and share their experiences with their fellow students. While the experience does not always lead to immediate employment, it does allow the student to make an informed choice regarding living and working in a rural community. A new pilot program this year makes use of the Alaska Teacher Placement offices to strategically place students in districts that will have a specific need for their content area. Additionally, principals and superintendents will receive a portfolio of information on each student so that they can recruit based on content area as well as position suitability.

The Rural Alaska Principal Preparation and Support (RAPPS) Program, a \$3.6 million federally funded partnership between UAA and the Alaska Staff Development Network, has been successful in preparing and placing rural administrators. Over the past four years, 74 RAPPS participants received scholarships. Of these, 63 remain in their home districts in 2012, all of whom will have completed their administrative certification by May 2013, when the grant ends. Only two of the candidates moved out of the state to accept administrative placements. Two districts have 100% retention of RAPPS candidates in their respective districts. District leaders have expressed interest in continuing the development of rural administrators beyond the life of the federal grant. Partnering superintendents have created a short list of potential candidates.

The UAA Statewide Induction Seminar is a year-long hybrid distance course for teachers and administrators new to rural Alaska. It seeks to narrow the achievement gap by addressing the cultural dissonance of the Western pedagogies, curricula and school reforms present in most schools by integrating approaches more aligned with Alaska Native ways of “being, valuing and doing.” The Seminar was designed by Western and Alaska Native university faculty working in collaboration. This increases the likelihood that the teachers and administrators new to rural Alaska understand the local cultural context and how deeply it affects student learning. With this vital awareness, the teachers and administrators have the tools to provide culturally appropriate learning experiences to students and also become more integrated into their communities, easing high attrition rates.

UAS is offering Alaska’s first Massively Open On-line Course (MOOC) in the education field. Teachers across Alaska can register either for credit or to participate free of charge in a semester long course designed to enable them to design differentiated curriculum to meet the diverse needs of Alaska students.

UAF Professor Jerry Lipka received a three-year U.S. Department of Education grant. The “Measuring Proportionally: Elders’ Wisdom Applied to Teaching and Learning Math Project” responds to the well-documented need to improve the academic performance (math in this project) of Alaska Native students by incorporating the Elders’ wisdom. The project will refine, develop, and implement elementary-mathematics instructional materials as well as professional development (PD) that will develop Culturally Competent Mathematics Teachers (CCMT). The professional development activities and supports will engage teachers as they learn to construct and use cultural mediating math tools, such as number lines, geometric sets, and fraction sets. By applying lessons learned from Elders, the project will show how each tool can be used to teach across the math strands. The project includes the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School (Anchorage), Alaska Gateway School District, Hoonah City School District, the Koliganek School (Southwest Regional School District), and the Yupiit School District. Additional school districts will be selected for piloting and for the quasi-experimental study in third year of the project.

#### *Faculty Research on Issues around Teacher Retention and Quality*

In addition to the educator preparation and support programs and initiatives described above, faculty at the University of Alaska Schools and College of Education are engaged in research to better understand the challenges as well as potential solutions around teacher retention and quality improvement. Several of these projects are highlighted here.

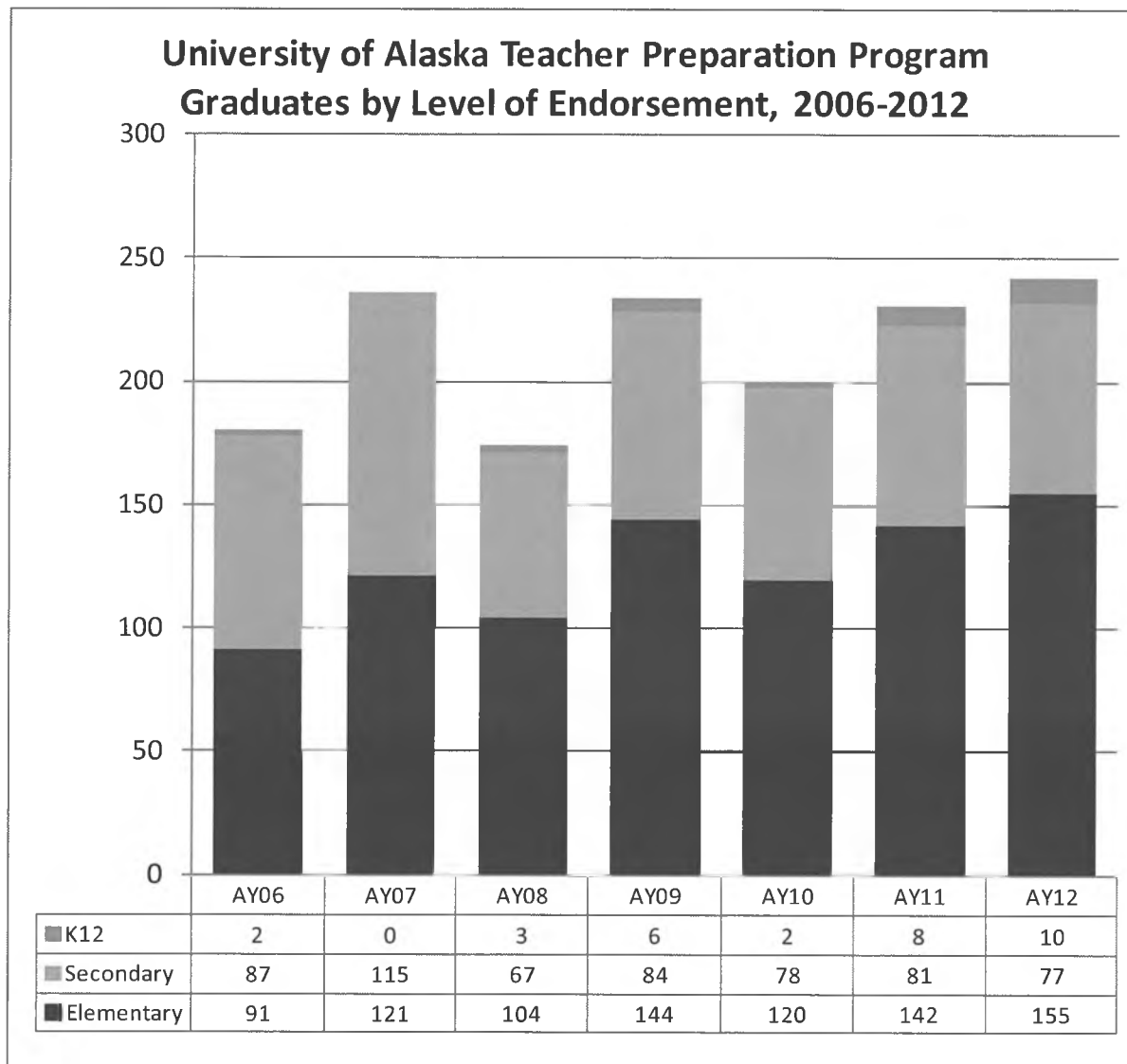
UAF Assistant Professor Ute Kaden received a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation for the study “Factors Related to Teacher Retention in Arctic Alaska, an Integral Part of the Circumpolar North.” The study aims to identify 1) the degree of school and community integration which influence teacher retention; 2) school workplace characteristics, including recruitment practices, which influence teacher retention; 3) teacher preparation practices which influence retention; and 4) other key variables for understanding teacher retention in Arctic Alaska. Researchers working on this grant include faculty from the UAF School of Education with backgrounds in indigenous studies, mathematics education, and special education and from UA Office of K-12 Outreach, including researchers working on the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project.

UAS Assistant Professor Martin Laster is completing the study “Driving and Restraining Forces for Quality Teacher Evaluation in Alaska,” funded by the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research. Dr. Laster is exploring the factors that impact quality teacher evaluation across the continuum of rural to urban districts, and looking at whether any might be modified by policy decisions.

#### Data on New Teacher Preparation in the University of Alaska System

Initial teacher preparation programs at the University of Alaska produced 242 new teachers from June 2011-May 2012 (Academic Year 2012); the average number of new teacher graduates over the last seven years is 214. These teacher graduates included 155 elementary-level teachers (including 17 specializing in early childhood), 77 secondary teachers and 10 certified for grades K-12, in Art, Music or Special Education. Among the secondary teachers were 16 new math teachers and 12 new science teachers. Fourteen of the new teachers were certified in Special Education (some at the elementary level, some at secondary, and some for K12). While the total number at all levels has

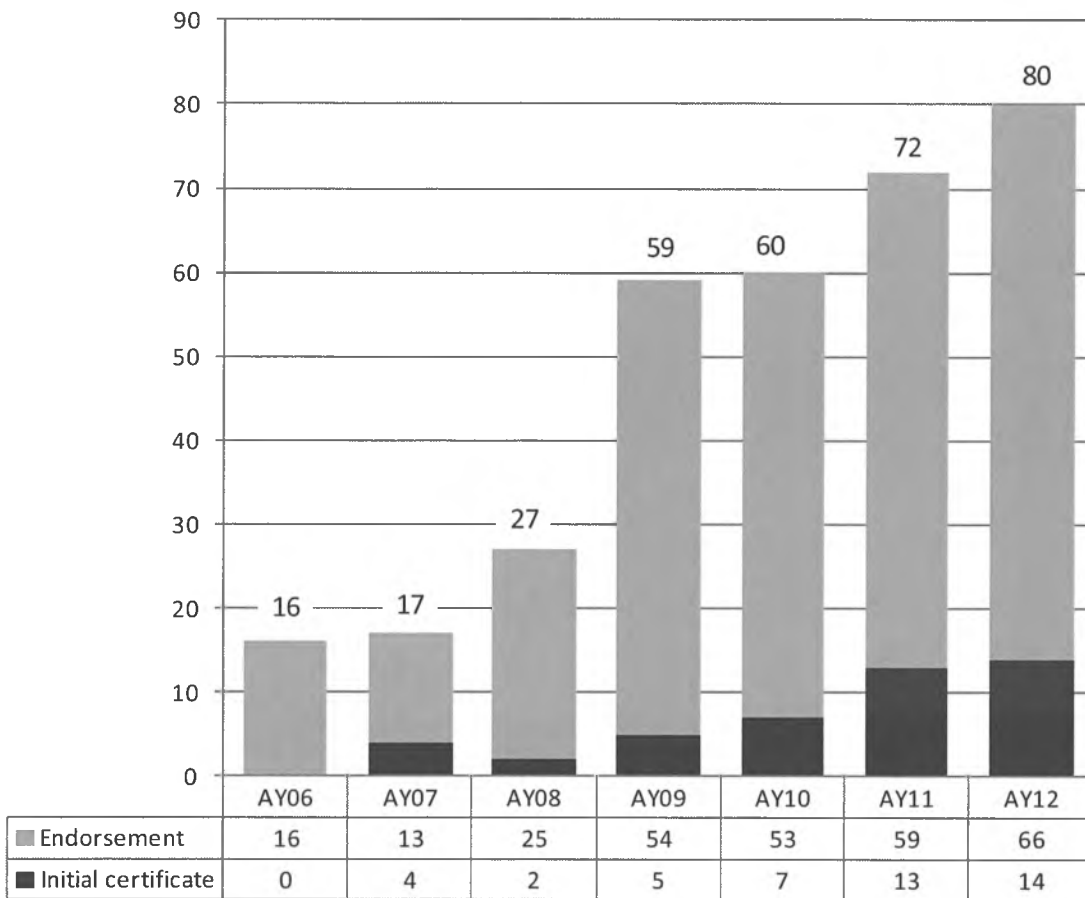
ranged from 180 to 242, there are no statistically significant trends for the total initial teachers, new elementary teachers or new secondary teachers.



*Special Education Teachers*

In addition to the 14 new teachers who obtained special education endorsements along with their initial certification, 66 existing teachers earned special education certificates, for a 2012 total of 80 new special education teachers. The number of teachers receiving special education endorsements at UA has grown 5-fold between 2006 and 2012, from 16 to 80.

## University of Alaska Special Education Graduates, 2006-2012



### *Retention of University of Alaska-prepared Teachers*

Between 2006 and 2012, the University of Alaska graduated about 200 new teachers each year. University of Alaska graduates made up about 12% of new hires across the state in 2011 and again in 2012. Teachers prepared in Alaska tend to stay in Alaska's schools longer than those who come from outside the state. So, while in a given year UA prepared educators may only make only about 12% of the new educators that districts hire, UA-prepared teachers make up 28 percent of the statewide teaching force. Moreover, the percent of all certified staff that received any education degree or endorsement from UA is slightly higher – about 32 percent. Appendix A includes detailed tables and graphs showing UA teacher education degrees and certificates granted from AY2006 - AY2012.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This report only addresses teachers prepared by University of Alaska programs. The forthcoming Education Supply and Demand Update Report will include data on educators prepared at Alaska Pacific University and via in-state alternative certification programs such as that operated by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

## **Additional efforts to address challenges in recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers**

In addition to the programs and research in the UA Schools and College of Education described above, there are programs and research being conducted in the UA Office of K-12 Outreach, as well as research being done at the UAA Center for Alaska Education Policy Research. We also briefly describe the new University of Alaska Teacher Education Consortium, which is facilitating conversations on teacher preparation and support issues between the UA Schools and College of Education and key stakeholders across the state.

### Future Educators of Alaska (FEA)

In 2013, FEA is evolving into a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO). For this reason, the focus of FEA this year is on preparing high school students for leadership roles. FEA will continue to help students plan for careers in education, work with FEA students in after-school clubs, and guide FEA students enrolled in "Exploring Education Careers" courses. In addition, FEA students will participate in competitions that hone their oral presentation skills. For the first time, more than a dozen elected FEA students from across rural Alaska will participate in youth leadership roles at the 2013 CTSO Performance Based Assessment Conference (March 21-23 in Anchorage). These FEA youth leaders also will guide the annual FEA student gathering (April 2013 on the UAA campus). In addition to the "Exploring Education Careers" course, a second dual-credit course is being planned to help ease graduating FEA high school student transition into UA Schools and Colleges of Education.

### Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP)

In 2013, ATP will host one major in-state and two out-of-state job fairs to connect qualified educators with Alaska districts, along with dozens of virtual job fairs and 24-hour iCommunity support. This year, ATP is increasing collaboration with the Deans of UA Schools and College of Education to determine how to offer career services to education majors in their final years at UA, with the ultimate goal of assuring placement in Alaska districts for increasing numbers of UA education graduates. Because ISER statistics show that teachers from Alaska stay longer in Alaskan schools, the ATP bridge between UA Schools and College of Education and Alaska districts for our UA education graduates should lead to increased retention and decreased dependence on teachers from out of state. A pilot project between ATP and UAS is underway to determine how much and what kind of intervention is needed to increase UA Education student interest in jobs in rural Alaska.

### Statewide Teacher Mentoring

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project is a partnership between the University of Alaska and the State Department of Education and Early Development. State funding currently provides mentors to an average of 380 early career teachers annually in mostly rural districts across the state each year. ASMP has received a \$15 million grant to expand the program to first- and second-year teachers in the Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Sitka and Kenai school districts. A large part of the money will

fund a randomized controlled trial to test how mentoring affects early career teachers' effectiveness and their students' achievement while serving an additional 520 early career teachers over three years.

### PREPARES

PREPARES is a 5-yr National Science Foundation funded scale-up research project that addresses the retention of teachers working in low SES districts with primarily indigenous student populations. The research is focused on gathering data to determine the effectiveness of a model that has shown success in retaining teachers in districts of primarily indigenous students in rural Alaska. Research involves a scale-up to a national arena to determine the transferability of the model to other parts of Alaska and the nation. The model involves providing professional development for teachers based on data-driven and research-based best-practices for engaging indigenous students in the study of science, math, and other subjects. The model advocates professional development for teachers to enable them to provide place-based, community-relevant, culturally responsive instruction in their classrooms. The underlying premise is this: teachers who learn to provide place-based instruction that is also community-relevant and culturally responsive are more likely to stay in rural districts longer and are more likely to see an increase in both the engagement and achievement of their students across subject areas than teachers who do not offer such instruction. In addition to showing promising results in terms of teacher retention and student achievement, unanticipated model outcomes include persistent increased community and parental engagement in student scholastic endeavors.

### Center for Alaska Education Policy Research

The Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) is engaged in research projects on teacher retention as well as on broader education issues in Alaska, including a statewide teacher survey to study the reasons teachers stay in or leave their schools and to better understand teacher perceptions of the places they work. This project is described in greater detail in the "*Future Reports*" section of the summary, along with several other projects on related topics.

### Bringing All the Players Together: The University of Alaska Teacher Education Consortium

On September 25, 2012, the first meeting of the University of Alaska Teacher Education Consortium was held. The meeting included a morning listening session, where educators and others were invited to share their thoughts on the UA Teacher Education programs, specifically on what the programs are doing well and should continue to do, what could be done to improve them, challenges in teacher preparation, and priorities for improvement. The afternoon meeting focused on developing actions that members of the consortium can take to improve teacher recruitment, preparation and retention. Notes from the meeting are included as Appendix D.

## Research on University of Alaska initial licensure graduates: Why aren't they teaching?

In response to questions raised by the Alaska Legislature and the UA Board of Regents regarding why more UA graduates are not in the classroom, in fall 2012 CAEPR researchers surveyed graduates of University of Alaska initial teacher preparation programs who graduated between the fall of 2010 and the summer of 2012 (More information on this study is provided in Appendix E.). The survey asked whether respondents had applied for a teaching certificate or for a job, whether they were working as teachers, in other education jobs, or in other fields. For those graduates who did not look for a teaching job, we asked why they chose not to teach; for those who looked and were not hired, they asked why they thought they weren't successful in obtaining a teaching position.

The response rate for the survey was less than 30% - too low to statistically generalize these findings or generalize the frequency of these outcomes to all program graduates. However, our respondents included graduates of all types on initial teacher programs, and were employed in public schools at similar rates to UA graduates overall. We believe the results of this study shed insight into the experiences of many UA graduates.

Of the 113 respondents, 90% applied for a teaching certificate upon completion of their program. The 10% who did not apply were not seeking a teaching job and cited travel, pursuit of other interests, acceptance or continuation of employment in nonteaching jobs, lack of available teaching jobs, or simply had no desire to teach.

95 percent of our respondents were employed the fall immediately following their graduation. More than 4 out of 5 respondents (84%) worked in some type of education job, although only about 40% were teachers (see table below). Of those respondents working in education, 14% worked in early childhood (pre-K) settings, 64% worked in elementary (K-6), and 66% in middle/high school settings.

Answer	Response	%
employed as a teacher	47	41%
working as a substitute teacher	33	29%
working in some other education job	17	15%
working in a job outside of education	12	11%
not working	4	4%
Total	113	100%

We asked the 59 percent of our respondents (68 of 113) who were not employed as teachers the fall following graduation, about their job searches (67 of the 68 responded to these questions). More than 70% of them (48) had applied for a teaching job immediately after graduation. The 19

who did not apply most frequently cited going back to school for advanced education, lack of job availability, and uncertainty about teaching in the current educational system. Other reasons, such as staying home to have a baby, needing a break, transferring with the military, accepting a position in a private school, and waiting on institutional recommendation and teacher certificate were given by just one or two respondents. About half of those not employed as teachers (9 out of 19) later searched for a teaching job.

Of the 48 who applied for teaching jobs immediately following graduation, most applied to one or more of Alaska’s five largest districts (Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, Fairbanks, and Juneau) and fewer than 20% applied to any other Alaska district.

Answer	Response	%
Anchorage School District	21	44%
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	9	19%
Mat-Su Borough School District	10	21%
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	8	17%
Juneau School District	10	21%
Other Alaska public schools	8	17%
Schools outside Alaska	10	21%
Alaska non-public schools	3	6%

We asked all those who had searched for a teaching job either immediately after graduation or later about their willingness to relocate. Of those 58 graduates, almost 60% were not able to relocate because they needed to stay in their home community. Most (23 of 25) respondents who were willing to relocate also identified places they were unwilling to relocate. While three said they would not be willing to leave Alaska, 15 said they would not move to some or all of rural Alaska. This means that only 10 of 58 graduates looking for (but not finding) work were able and willing to relocate to rural Alaska districts. Family/personal reasons and environment (including weather, lifestyle, and teaching/living conditions) were the major reasons respondents would not be willing to relocate to specific areas.

We asked our respondents who applied but did not get a job, why they believed they were not hired. By far the most frequent answer was competition, lack of jobs, or both, cited by almost two-thirds (35 of the 54) of our respondents. Seven were unwilling to relocate and a few (2 to 4 for each reason) cited lack of experience, lack of interviewing skills, moving and having a baby. We interviewed 21 of our survey respondents (representing all UA initial teacher preparation programs) who were not employed as teachers the fall immediately following graduation to explore these reasons in more depth.

Reflecting the answers above, 80% (17) indicated there were limited teaching job opportunities, which included comments related to no openings, no offers, district budget constraints, and

competition/lack of experience. Adding to those answers, one-third (7) listed other opportunities, such as travel, employment in nonteaching jobs, and family as reasons. Third, slightly less than 20% (4) expressed uncertainty about teaching. (Percentages do not equal 100 because many respondents provided multiple reasons.)

When asked what UA could do to assist in their search for employment, the most frequent response (8 of the 21) was nothing or "I don't know." Two graduates recommended resume writing help, and one each recommended help with classroom management, assessment, interviewing practice, cover letter writing, job hunting protocol (who to contact), information about job fairs and job openings, clarification of the certification process, and honesty about the bleak job opportunities.

To gain an additional perspective on UA graduates, we interviewed human resource personnel from the five Alaska school districts that hire the largest number of UA graduates (Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Mat-Su). These key informants have general knowledge of the quality of teachers hired by their districts. When asked how well prepared they found UA graduates, two were complimentary, two were neutral, and one was uncomplimentary.

Key informants reported both consistent strengths and weaknesses of UA graduates. Strengths included understanding the environment and diverse student populations of the district, role of the general education teacher working with ELL students, classroom management, assessment, and the connection between instruction and assessment. Other strengths included passion for teaching, love of students, interest and passion for being in education, and knowledge of the state and the district in which they have applied. One key informant indicated that there were no consistent strengths that set UA graduates apart. Weaknesses included preparation in special education, instructional practices, literacy integration at the secondary level, and the role of the general education teacher in working with special education students. Two key informants indicated that there were no consistent weaknesses, but one of these indicated more preparation in dealing with diverse populations would be beneficial.

National and Alaska researchers have long documented that teacher shortages are both location and subject-specific (NCREL, 2000; McDiarmid, 2003), and these data are in line with those findings. While UA graduates are generally prepared to teach, there are some graduates who are less prepared for the classroom, as reflected by one of our key informants. The largest factor in explaining graduates' inability to finding teaching jobs, though, seems to be that too many graduates are competing for the limited positions in the state's largest districts, and too few are able to relocate to rural and remote schools where districts need more applicants. Another factor in graduates' difficulty finding jobs is that more prospective teachers are choosing elementary education degrees than there are openings for them, and too few are choosing to teach in hard-to-fill areas such as special education, secondary math and secondary physical science.

## Summary

The University of Alaska system continues to focus on expanding the number of qualified Alaskans who can be employed in Alaska's schools. Each year, the UA system adds about 200 new teachers to Alaska's teaching force and 60-70% of those go on to teach in Alaska's public schools. However, most of these newly certified teachers seek employment in urban or road system districts, while most of the teaching vacancies occur in remote and rural districts. This leaves the state's schools, especially the rural schools, needing to hire several hundred teachers from elsewhere.

No systematic research has been conducted on why there are not more Alaskans choosing to enter the teaching profession. However, there are a number of factors that may be affecting these decisions, from changes in the teacher retirement system to a reduction in the competitiveness of Alaska's teacher salaries compared with salaries in other professions and in other states, to the expenses teacher candidates must incur during their education, in particular during their unpaid clinical practice, when it is nearly impossible to maintain outside employment. Adding to this is concern about trends in teacher evaluation; a new teacher evaluation plan just adopted in Alaska relies extensively on student achievement data, and both within the state and across the nation there is unease about how this will affect teacher employment and salaries. CAEPR is conducting research this spring that should help policymakers and teacher educators better understand the impact of these issues. Finally, the downturn in the economy the past few years made teaching jobs less available; fewer teachers left Alaska's schools, and flat funding for the state's schools also led to fewer openings and even layoffs in some districts.<sup>4</sup>

This report highlights what the University of Alaska is doing to improve the recruitment and retention of students for teacher education programs and to strengthen existing programs. The UA Teacher Education Plan identified several goals in this area that faculty and staff are now working on, and CAEPR is doing research around issues that impact those goals. In addition, the University of Alaska Office of K-12 Outreach is supporting efforts to recruit and retain teachers across the state, working directly with districts and conducting research.

All of these efforts should move the University of Alaska system toward better meeting the needs of Alaska's schools. However, the broader factors affecting the decisions of students to enter college, pursue the teaching profession, choose to work in rural schools, and stay in the profession once they complete their training require a broad effort that includes current teachers and administrators, parents, community leaders, and policymakers. We need to explore questions and have frank discussions around working conditions, teacher compensation and incentives to enter the field, among other issues. All of these are factors that affect the ability of Alaska's schools to attract and retain educators.

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<sup>4</sup> In 2012-2013 the Anchorage School District laid off teachers and did not accept new applications for teachers in several content areas. <http://www.asdk12.org/employment/certificated/12-13applications/>

### Future Reports

The next installment of this report is due in spring 2015. In addition to reporting updated data on teachers and other educators prepared by the University of Alaska, we will continue to explore issues of concern around teacher recruitment, preparation and retention in Alaska. There are several research projects underway that will inform the next report:

*a) Statewide Teacher Survey*

In Spring 2013, CAEPR will conduct a survey on the factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay in their schools/districts or to leave. Teachers will be asked about issues such as their perceptions of leadership in their school; their relationships with parents and community; salary, benefits and financial incentives to stay in their school; and mentoring and professional development efforts. This survey will be done in collaboration with UAF Assistant Professor Ute Kaden. 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 did not, and analyze the relationship between teacher survey responses and work outcomes, so that they can create models around the factors contributing to teacher retention and turnover.

*b) Educator Supply and Demand Study*

CAEPR is preparing a comprehensive update of data on teacher and administrator supply, demand and turnover, including a comprehensive literature review on factors influencing teacher retention and turnover; data on the number of teachers and administrators prepared by institutions in-state versus coming in from outside Alaska; teacher and administrator turnover rates by district; and a look specifically at the numbers and career pathways of Alaska Native teachers and administrators.

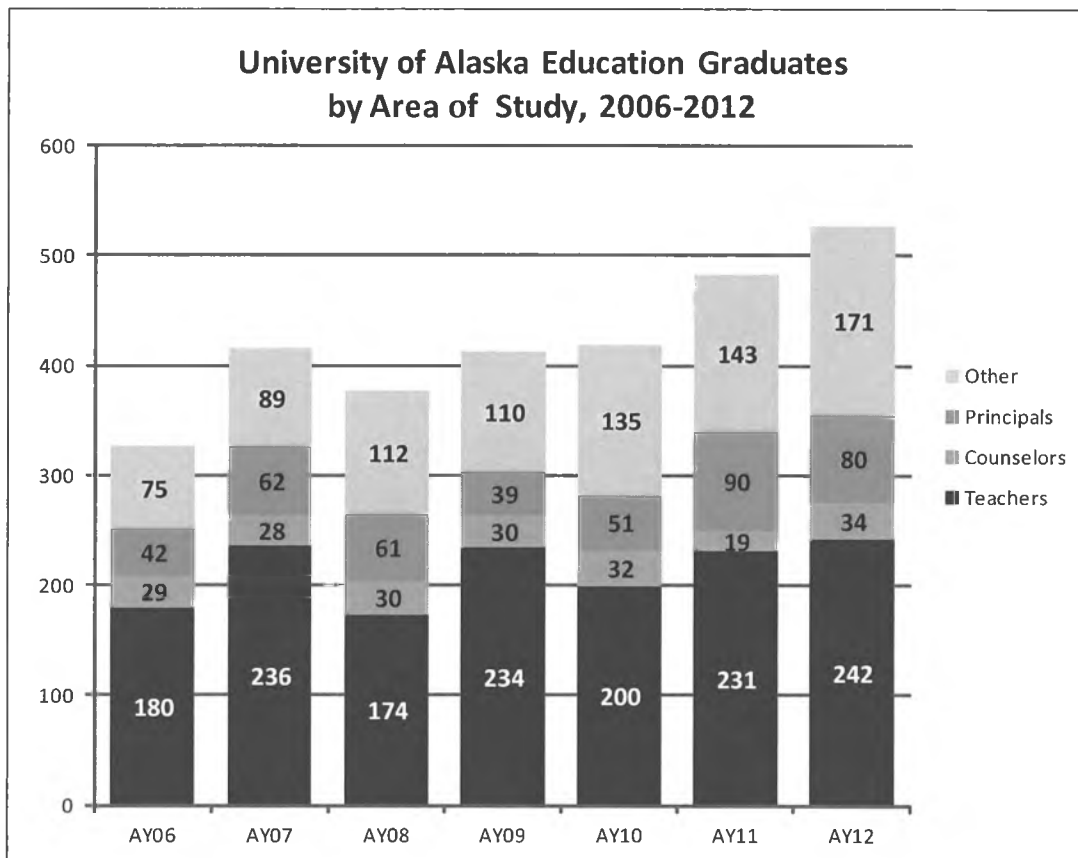
*c) University of Alaska Teacher Education Graduate Surveys*

In collaboration with the UA Schools and College of Education, CAEPR will be conducting surveys of graduates from all of the education programs across the UA system one, three and five years after they graduate as well as just before graduation. We will report specifically on the teacher education graduates, focusing on their perceptions of how well they were prepared for their current positions and suggestions they have for strengthening teacher preparation programs.

## Appendix A: Detailed Data Tables

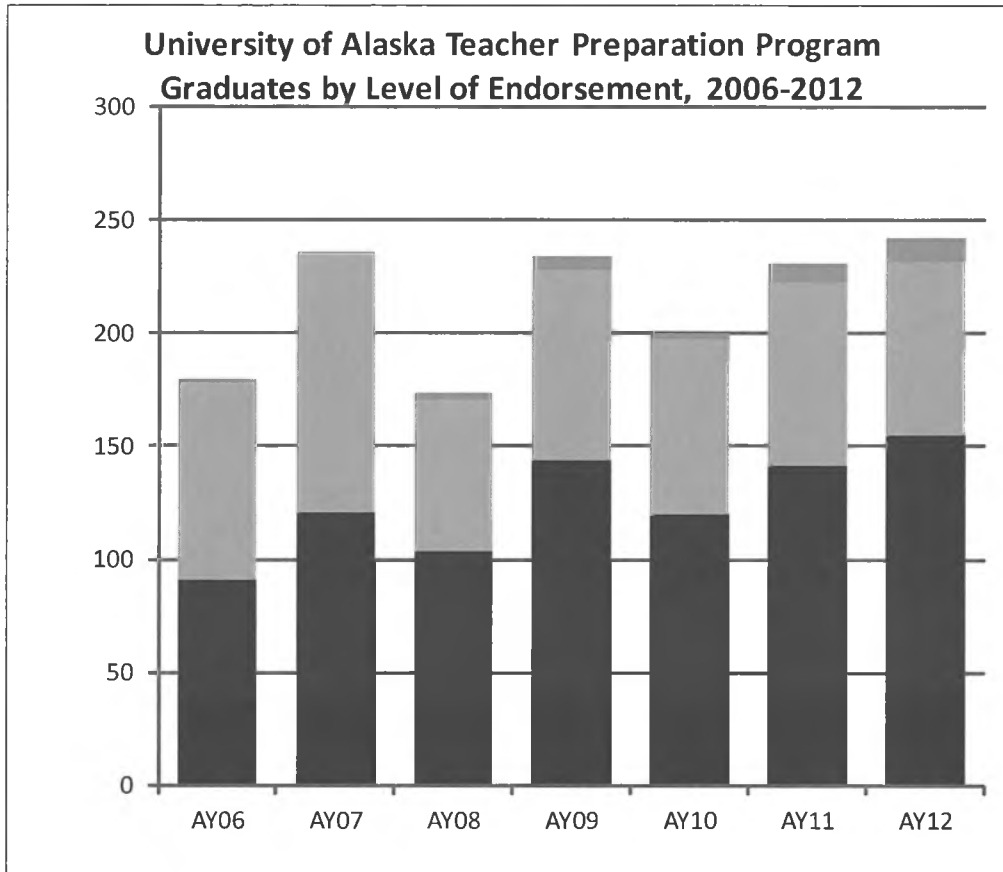
### A1. University of Alaska Education Program Graduates

	AY06	AY07	AY08	AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12
Teachers	180	236	174	234	200	231	242
Counselors	29	28	30	30	32	19	34
Principals	42	62	61	39	51	90	80
Other	75	89	112	110	135	143	171
	326	415	377	413	418	483	527



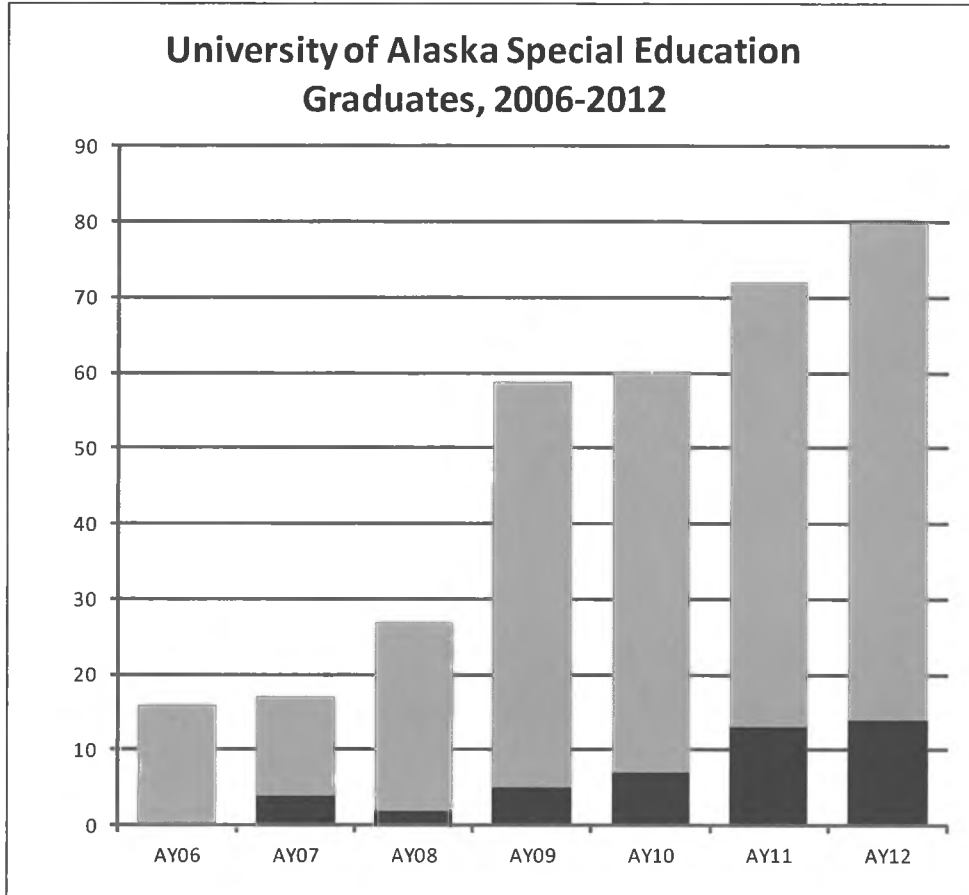
**University of Alaska Initial Teacher Program Graduates by Level**

	AY06	AY07	AY08	AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12
Elementary	91	121	104	144	120	142	155
Secondary	87	115	67	84	78	81	77
K12	2	0	3	6	2	8	10



**University of Alaska Special Education Graduates - Initial Licensure & Endorsement**

	AY06	AY07	AY08	AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12
Initial certificate	0	4	2	5	7	13	14
Endorsement	16	13	25	54	53	59	66
SpED total	16	17	27	59	60	72	80



## A2. Teacher Turnover Rates by District, 1999-2012

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
2 'Denali '	28.6%	13.8%	33.3%	14.8%	37.9%	17.2%	20.0%	18.2%	21.2%	23.3%	26.7%	23.1%	14.8%
3 'Alaska Gateway'	12.5%	20.0%	13.9%	24.2%	23.5%	12.1%	28.6%	31.3%	18.8%	25.8%	12.9%	13.3%	11.8%
4 'Aleutian Region'	42.9%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	33.3%	57.1%	n/a	n/a	33.3%	33.3%	50.0%	60.0%	50.0%
5 'Anchorage'	8.0%	7.8%	9.7%	11.9%	9.8%	10.2%	8.5%	9.7%	11.9%	8.8%	7.1%	8.0%	9.1%
6 'Annette Island'	18.2%	23.3%	37.0%	7.4%	25.0%	18.2%	34.4%	30.0%	40.6%	6.9%	18.8%	41.4%	29.6%
7 'Bering Strait'	33.1%	34.0%	23.5%	32.2%	34.1%	32.7%	21.9%	19.3%	24.7%	22.8%	27.9%	25.6%	25.7%
8 'Bristol Bay'	8.3%	8.3%	12.5%	18.2%	35.0%	21.1%	37.5%	20.0%	37.5%	25.0%	20.0%	43.8%	40.0%
9 'Chatham'	19.0%	28.6%	12.5%	34.8%	35.0%	23.8%	40.0%	31.3%	33.3%	52.6%	16.7%	15.0%	35.3%
10 'Chugach'	16.7%	8.3%	35.7%	7.1%	35.3%	25.0%	7.1%	8.3%	7.1%	0.0%	7.7%	21.1%	12.5%
11 'Copper River'	13.6%	14.6%	9.5%	14.0%	11.9%	15.8%	13.2%	17.9%	15.8%	15.8%	13.5%	21.1%	16.7%
12 'Cordova City'	27.8%	8.6%	18.9%	17.1%	15.2%	25.0%	6.3%	22.6%	7.1%	10.7%	3.4%	10.0%	17.9%
13 'Craig City'	23.1%	11.5%	9.7%	28.6%	17.1%	16.2%	17.6%	12.5%	8.8%	20.0%	10.8%	31.0%	11.1%
14 'DeltaGreely'	12.9%	22.0%	19.1%	11.9%	24.5%	14.8%	14.5%	12.7%	16.4%	18.5%	19.4%	20.0%	14.5%
15 'Dillingham'	31.7%	19.4%	22.0%	40.5%	22.5%	15.8%	22.5%	25.6%	37.8%	31.0%	22.0%	12.8%	10.5%
16 'Fairbanks'	0.4%	15.5%	8.8%	10.6%	11.2%	10.5%	8.4%	10.9%	10.0%	11.7%	8.8%	10.3%	10.9%
17 'Galena'	9.8%	19.0%	8.9%	7.9%	13.2%	11.8%	18.2%	13.8%	3.2%	19.1%	7.6%	10.9%	12.3%
18 'Haines'	14.7%	11.4%	12.9%	23.3%	23.1%	19.0%	4.5%	22.7%	9.5%	4.8%	13.0%	16.0%	23.1%
19 'Hoonah'	19.0%	4.5%	4.5%	26.1%	15.8%	20.0%	7.7%	14.3%	7.7%	33.3%	50.0%	50.0%	25.0%
20 'Hydaburg'	33.3%	44.4%	44.4%	18.2%	63.6%	40.0%	9.1%	9.1%	20.0%	27.3%	11.1%	22.2%	11.1%
21 'Iditarod'	35.0%	38.5%	50.0%	48.4%	68.8%	46.7%	25.8%	41.4%	37.5%	29.6%	19.0%	52.0%	48.0%
22 'Juneau'	17.7%	8.5%	11.0%	10.3%	13.0%	8.5%	10.9%	10.1%	9.8%	10.2%	10.2%	11.1%	10.5%
23 'Kake'	33.3%	41.2%	7.1%	0.0%	18.8%	42.9%	31.3%	38.5%	11.1%	20.0%	9.1%	8.3%	0.0%
24 'Kenai'	12.8%	6.8%	9.0%	12.1%	13.6%	10.8%	11.2%	13.3%	12.7%	10.1%	10.5%	9.0%	9.2%
25 'Ketchikan'	9.7%	14.3%	9.7%	11.9%	8.5%	7.7%	4.2%	10.6%	12.3%	13.5%	11.3%	10.1%	9.2%
27 'Klawock'	n/a	n/a	18.8%	17.6%	26.7%	7.1%	26.7%	6.7%	13.3%	0.0%	6.7%	13.3%	5.9%
28 'Kodiak'	12.3%	14.1%	10.7%	13.0%	11.5%	11.0%	14.8%	11.6%	10.8%	14.8%	8.8%	17.0%	14.0%
29 'Kuspuk'	27.7%	29.8%	34.8%	36.2%	33.3%	42.1%	22.6%	34.3%	16.7%	22.5%	17.9%	26.5%	5.7%
30 'Lake & Peninsula'	32.0%	37.5%	42.6%	27.5%	27.5%	20.4%	34.0%	39.1%	27.5%	8.9%	31.9%	28.3%	18.2%
31 'Lower Kuskokwim'	23.4%	18.4%	22.1%	23.7%	24.0%	19.8%	20.3%	14.8%	21.6%	10.8%	16.4%	16.0%	11.7%
32 'Lower Yukon'	22.7%	22.6%	31.0%	29.5%	17.1%	21.1%	30.1%	31.9%	25.0%	27.9%	22.8%	20.7%	29.5%
33 'MatSu '	14.7%	5.6%	6.0%	7.6%	8.9%	8.8%	7.5%	6.7%	10.5%	7.4%	6.6%	5.4%	10.7%

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
34 'Nenana'	13.3%	18.2%	14.3%	32.4%	41.9%	18.2%	14.3%	7.7%	24.0%	9.1%	12.0%	3.8%	20.0%
35 'Nome'	21.8%	16.4%	25.0%	17.6%	22.4%	14.9%	6.5%	10.0%	20.0%	13.7%	9.8%	17.0%	18.2%
36 'North Slope'	6.0%	31.4%	21.3%	22.7%	17.7%	20.9%	24.2%	46.2%	42.6%	50.0%	25.9%	29.3%	24.4%
37 'Northwest Arctic'	23.2%	26.0%	29.3%	25.9%	19.3%	24.6%	24.7%	19.0%	22.0%	29.5%	16.8%	26.2%	33.3%
38 'Pelican'	25.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%	33.3%	75.0%	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
39 'Petersburg'	6.5%	10.9%	2.1%	14.6%	14.6%	7.0%	15.2%	9.1%	11.1%	12.2%	7.0%	9.5%	7.9%
40 'Pribilof'	28.6%	25.0%	54.5%	38.5%	16.7%	18.2%	35.7%	41.7%	36.4%	50.0%	36.4%	27.3%	45.5%
42 'Sitka'	7.4%	10.3%	7.2%	6.7%	17.1%	7.5%	8.3%	4.6%	12.8%	9.3%	9.4%	11.9%	7.7%
43 'Skagway'	15.4%	23.1%	30.8%	21.4%	15.4%	38.5%	8.3%	7.7%	30.8%	16.7%	8.3%	30.8%	11.1%
44 'Southeast Island'	n/a	n/a	27.3%	29.2%	33.3%	38.1%	13.6%	42.9%	30.0%	25.0%	26.1%	15.8%	27.3%
45 'Southwest Region'	27.9%	27.7%	35.8%	36.4%	15.6%	n/a	n/a	39.3%	16.1%	29.7%	28.6%	40.3%	25.9%
46 'Saint Marys'	36.4%	41.7%	7.1%	42.9%	64.3%	38.5%	60.0%	33.3%	30.8%	30.8%	14.3%	7.1%	57.1%
47 'Unalaska'	n/a	n/a	10.3%	20.0%	10.0%	6.7%	12.9%	6.3%	28.1%	21.9%	16.1%	12.5%	9.4%
48 'Valdez'	7.0%	6.9%	11.1%	20.0%	11.5%	11.9%	8.6%	5.5%	7.7%	5.9%	4.1%	9.6%	7.8%
49 'Wrangell'	15.2%	20.6%	0.0%	6.3%	21.2%	0.0%	7.4%	19.2%	12.0%	14.8%	11.5%	10.3%	3.6%
50 'Yakutat'	31.3%	31.3%	35.3%	36.8%	17.6%	20.0%	16.7%	7.1%	23.1%	15.4%	15.4%	0.0%	21.4%
51 'Yukon Flats'	40.0%	28.6%	26.8%	31.4%	47.1%	28.1%	34.4%	45.5%	37.9%	37.5%	29.0%	32.3%	33.3%
52 'Yukon Koyukuk'	n/a	n/a	44.2%	32.0%	32.0%	24.5%	21.5%	39.4%	31.6%	24.4%	12.8%	23.6%	17.6%
53 'Tanana'	62.5%	16.7%	66.7%	25.0%	55.6%	71.4%	16.7%	42.9%	25.0%	83.3%	50.0%	40.0%	60.0%
54 'Yupiit'	n/a	n/a	26.5%	29.7%	32.4%	25.7%	18.4%	43.9%	35.0%	46.5%	52.3%	39.1%	22.2%
55 'Kashunamiut'	35.0%	20.0%	18.2%	8.0%	19.2%	17.2%	40.7%	37.9%	29.4%	31.3%	15.6%	15.2%	50.0%
56 'Aleutians East'	36.7%	38.2%	27.8%	28.9%	47.1%	23.5%	n/a	n/a	40.0%	24.2%	5.7%	41.2%	9.7%
98 'Mt Edgecumbe'	7.1%	20.0%	6.7%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	10.5%	8.7%	4.2%	0.0%	8.3%	16.0%
99 Alyeska Central Sch	20.0%	19.0%	5.6%	15.0%	35.0%	100.0%	School no longer in operation						
Alaska total	12.1%	12.7%	13.0%	14.7%	14.3%	13.1%	12.2%	13.6%	14.6%	13.0%	10.8%	12.0%	12.5%
Urban	8.7%	8.7%	9.1%	11.0%	10.5%	10.0%	8.7%	9.8%	11.3%	9.2%	7.8%	8.2%	9.7%
Rural:	19.7%	21.4%	21.2%	22.5%	22.4%	20.0%	19.9%	21.9%	21.7%	21.4%	17.4%	20.7%	19.0%

Notes: Turnover defined as the percent of teachers who remain in their district from one year to the next.

'Urban' districts are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Matanuska-Susitna. 'Rural' districts are all other districts

'n/a' means data not available for that district that year.

Source: Ak Department of Education and Early Development Certified Staff Accounting Database; data analyzed by the Institute of Social and Economic Research, UAA

## Appendix B: Education Certification Programs at the University of Alaska

<b>Baccalaureate degrees with Certification</b> (Institutional Recommendations)	<b>UAA</b>	<b>UAF</b>	<b>UAS</b>	<b>Review/Approvals</b>
Early Childhood B.A. Pre-K-3	F			NAEYC, DEED
Elementary Education K-6	F	F, D		ACEI, DEED
Elementary B.A. K-8			F, D	ACEI, DEED
Special Education B.A.			D	New Fall 2012
Bachelor of Music in Music Education		F		NASM
<b>Undergraduate Certificates</b> (Institutional Recommendations)				
Undergraduate Certificate, K-12 Art,		F, D		NAEA
Undergraduate Certificate, Secondary 7-12		F, D		DEED and SPAs
<b>Post-Baccalaureate Certificates</b> (Institutional Recommendations)				
Early Childhood Pre-K-3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	F			NAEYC, DEED
Elementary Education K-6	F	F, D		ACEI, DEED
Secondary 7-12		F, D		DEED and SPAs
K-12 Art		F, D		NAEA
Special Education		F, D		CEC, DEED
<b>Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Certification</b> (Institutional Recommendations)				
Elementary Education MAT			F	ACEI, DEED
Secondary: Content Areas MAT, Distance	D	D	F, D	DEED
Special Education MAT			F	CEC, DEED
<b>Graduate Certificates</b> (Institutional Recommendations)				
Counseling		F, D		CACREP
Educational Leadership: Principal	D			ELCC, DEED
Educational Leadership: Superintendent	D			ELCC, DEED
Language Education (English Language Learner)	F			DEED
Special Education	D		D	CEC, DEED

<b>Master of Education (MEd) with Licensure (Institutional Recommendations)</b>	<b>UAA</b>	<b>UAF</b>	<b>UAS</b>	<b>Review/Approvals</b>
Counseling	F, D, H	F, D		CACREP
Educational Leadership (principal)	D		H	ELCC, DEED
Educational Leadership (superintendent)				ELCC, DEED
Educational Technology			D	ISTE, DEED
Mathematics Education			D	DEED
Teaching and Learning	D			DEED
Early Childhood Special Education	F			DEC, DEC, DEED
Special Education	D	F, D	D	CEC, DEED
Reading Specialist			D	IRA, DEED
<b>Non-Licensure Programs</b>				
Early Childhood Development Undergraduate Certificate	F			NAEYC, DEED
Early Childhood Development Associate of Applied Science (AAS)	F			NAEYC, DEED
Early Childhood Special Education M.Ed.	F			DEC, DEC, DEED
Counseling Graduate Certificate	F, D, H			CACREP
M.Ed. Community Counseling		F, D		CACREP
M.Ed. in Online Innovation & Design		D		ISTE

**Type of Program Key:**

*F = Face to Face, D = Distance, H = Hybrid*

**Program Approvals Key:**

*ACEI Association for Childhood Education International*

*CACREP Council for the Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs*

*CEC Council for Exceptional Children*

*ELCC` Educational Leadership Constituent CouncilD*

*NAEA National Art Education Association*

*NAEYC National Association for the Education of Young Children*

*NASM National Association of Schools of Music*

*IRA International Reading Association*

*ISTE International Society for Technology in Education*

*SPAs Specialty Professional Associations*

**UAA Special Notes:**

1. Content areas of MAT at UAA include: Business Education, English/Language Arts, ESL, Family and Consumer Science, General Science, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Social Studies, Technology Education, and World Languages.
2. MAT, Graduate Certificate, and MEd programs at UAA are 100% available through distance delivery.
3. Baccalaureate and Post-Baccalaureate programs are 60-80% available through distance delivery.

**UAS Special Notes:**

1. All programs are distance delivered. Elementary B.A. and MAT, Special Education B.A., MAT and M.Ed., Mathematics Education and Technology Education are 100% distance delivery.

## Appendix C: Progress Toward the Goals of the UA Teacher Education Plan

In 2010, the Deans of Education and provosts at the three MAUs developed the “University of Alaska Teacher Education Plan,” which laid out the following goals:

- A. Recruit and retain more students in education, particularly Alaska residents
- B. Increase program access through multiple delivery methods
- C. Enhance educator preparation programs in special education and in math and science teaching
- D. Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for education challenges in Alaska

The following is a brief overview of progress toward meeting those goals:

- A. Recruit and retain more students in Education, particularly Alaska residents
    - UA Schools and Colleges of Education have written several competitive grants to help support Alaska Natives who are interested in becoming teachers. These grants provide funding and other resources that help put Alaska citizens into Alaska’s schools and include the following:
      - US Department of Education funded teacher education programs
      - Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska Schools (PITAAS) program supports both teacher candidates and teachers who are working toward advanced degrees
      - The Village Teacher Program is focused on providing experienced Alaska Native teachers an opportunity to obtain advanced degrees and additional training for supporting students. 16 are preparing to become reading specialists and 11 to become district math specialists
      - A privately funded project with a cohort of paraprofessionals working toward teacher certification in Chevak, Alaska
      - National Science Foundation grants
      - Student teacher retention in arctic Alaska
      - Indigenous mathematics knowledge across three cultures
  - B. Increase program access through multiple delivery methods
    - All three MAU programs work closely with education students to guide them toward positive outcomes and to help ensure success in teacher education
    - Most programs are available with distance options so that students in rural and remote locations have access to teacher education programs
  - C. Enhance Educator preparation in special education and in math and science teaching
    - Between 2006 and 2011, the University of Alaska system more than doubled the annual number of special education graduates, from 29 in 2006 to 68 in 2011
    - In order to increase the number of graduates, UAA and UAS assisted UAF in developing a Special Education program, so that there are special education programs at all three MAUs
-

- To address issues of students moving between campuses, the special education faculty and the Deans from each MAU met to collaborate over (1) a common core of courses; (2) the same credit requirements for the post-baccalaureate certifications and master's degree programs, making it easier to transfer courses between programs, and (3) sharing supervision of clinical practice students to save on the cost of travel
  - A US Department of Education grant is currently funding 11 Native educators for the M.Ed. Mathematics Specialist degree.
- D. Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for Alaska's education challenges
- The UA College and Schools of Education are collaborating with the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) to study a number of issues related to teacher preparation and retention in Alaska. CAEPR is conducting a study of recent graduates from the three MAUs to find out why some teacher education graduates are not working in the field
  - Deans at the 3 MAUs are working with CAEPR to design both an alumni and employer survey that will give us data for program improvement
  - CAEPR funds faculty across the three MAUs to conduct research on important education policy issues

The Teacher Education Plan is available online at:

[http://www.alaska.edu/files/research/TeachPrepPlan\\_101112.pdf](http://www.alaska.edu/files/research/TeachPrepPlan_101112.pdf)

## Appendix D: University of Alaska Teacher Education Consortium

September 25, 2012 Meeting Notes

In service of an overarching goal of improving UA teacher education programs, two meetings were held on September 25, 2012 to gather input from a wide range of stakeholders. The first meeting was a Listening Session that took place from 8:30 am until 10:00 am in the Lee Gorsuch Commons. Following the Listening Session, the Alaska Education Consortium met from 10:30 am – 2:00 pm in the same location.

This paper is a summary of both meetings and provides an interpretation of alignment between the clusters of input and the 2011 Alaska Teacher Education Plan.

### Listening Session

The purpose of this session was to take comments from a variety of stakeholders in the teacher education system. Thirty-two participants attended the session in Anchorage, and 19 statewide participants called in. The comments were captured in two ways: the session was recorded, and Diane Hirshberg, Associate Professor, Institute of Social and Economic Research and invitee to the Alaska Teacher Education Consortium, took notes. Several leaders within the UA system were present to hear the comments: Deans of Education Allan Morotti, UAF, Deborah Lo, UAS, and Ed McLain, interim, UAA; UA President Patrick Gamble, UA Vice President for Academic Affairs Dana Thomas, UAF Provost Susan Henrichs, and UAA Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Elisha “Bear” Baker. Richard Caulfield, UAS Provost & Executive Dean, School of Career Education, convened the session.

The participants were asked to focus their comments on these four questions:

1. What are we doing well and should continue to do?
2. What can we do to improve our teacher preparation programs? How and where can we be better?
3. What are some challenges you face in teacher preparation?
4. Where should the priorities be for improvement?

Participant comments can be organized into these clusters:

- Mentoring for new teachers
- Dialogue, partnerships, and collaboration
- Recruitment of Alaska teachers and Native Alaska teachers
- Quality of new Alaska-educated teachers
- Timing of student teachers into schools
- Support strategies for Paraprofessionals
- Alaska Teacher Education Consortium

### Membership

President Gamble invited the following individuals to serve as members of the Alaska Teacher Education Consortium and the following participated in the meeting: EED Commissioner Michael

Hanley, Alaska School Board Executive Director Carl Rose who was represented by Joseph Reeves, Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education Executive Director Diane Barrans, Alaska Council of School Administrators Executive Director Bruce Johnson, President of NEA Alaska Ron Furher, and President of Sealaska Heritage Institute Rosita Worl and Diane Hirshberg. Al Tamagni, representing Alaska PTA, was unable to attend. Also participating as members of the Consortium were Deans of Education Allan Morotti, UAF, Deborah Lo, UAS, and Ed McLain, interim, UAA; UA Vice President for Academic Affairs Dana Thomas, UAA Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs Susan Henrichs, and UAA Provost Elisha "Bear" Baker, and Diane Hirshberg, Associate Professor, Institute of Social and Economic Research. UAS Provost Richard Caulfield, UAS, convened the session.

### History

Earlier in 2012, President Gamble and the Alaska Board of Regents' directed university leadership and all Schools and College of Education to develop and implement a teacher education plan. The University of Alaska Teacher Education Plan, January 20, 2011 sets out the following goals:

- Recruit, retain, and graduate more students in education, particularly Alaska residents
- Increase program access through multiple delivery methods
- Enhance educator preparation programs in special education and in math and science teaching
- Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for education challenges in Alaska

As a step toward greater strategic alignment among key education leaders and organizations, this plan establishes the Alaska Teacher Education Consortium. According to the plan, the Consortium will provide a "forum to co-opt institutional expertise, leverage academic resources, and ensure that any strategies that come out of the UA Plan a fully coordinated with those of partner organizations."

### Meeting Summary

The meeting began with a discussion with UA President Gamble who spoke about the context and direction of the Consortium's work and the importance of teacher education to the mission of the University. His remarks are paraphrased in CAEPR's meeting summary as follows:

- Growth goal has changed to internal quality
- Flat-funding status has helped focus on priorities, collaboration, and cooperation
- Good data makes a difference in choosing a good direction
- Take a risk on good ideas supported by research
- Show results in a cost-effective environment
- Teachers are one of the biggest factors in student success

During the working lunch, Dr. Kathryn Bertram, UA Statewide K-12 Outreach Director, presented a continuum of support available for prospective teachers, that includes Future Educators of Alaska, Alaska Teacher Placement, the Statewide Mentoring Project, and the Prepares program.

Following lunch, Consortium invitees were asked to focus on prioritizing UA's work in the area of teacher preparation. Invitees were asked to identify the most important one or two things they would like to see UA do to improve teacher education programs. Their comments are grouped into four clusters and their specific suggestions are bulleted.

### Rural and Native Education

- Stronger collaboration with indigenous organizations to change rural teacher preparation
- Increase variety, quality and quantity of rural internships (student teaching placements)
- Promote cross-cultural studies of Alaska Native culture, history, and legal status
- Use, expand, improve UA capacity to reach out to rural population through both face to face and enhanced distance media

### UA Teacher Preparation Programs and Curriculum

- Integrate skills and training for using student performance data to enhance and improve content or pedagogy
- Integrate traditional knowledge systems into curricula; pair traditional values with western values
- Prepare more highly qualified teachers capable of teaching at multiple grade levels; develop skills in differentiation for multi-level classrooms
- Provide field experiences earlier in the program
- Provide comprehensive advisement throughout teacher education training; consider non-retention of slow-developing students
- Improve literacy teaching standards across all subject areas
- Ensure that each teacher education graduate is an expert in the K-12 standards and cultural standards she or he will be teaching
- Share instructional resources across MAUs

### GER Engagement

- Work with colleagues in Arts & Sciences to strengthen content knowledge of students
- Engagement with K-12 schools
- Recruit and education more Alaska Native and other minority teachers
  - Increase UA visibility in K-12 schools as part of a recruitment strategy
  - Work with P-12 schools and Arts & Sciences to ensure preparedness
  - Explore ways to encourage P-12 schools to hire Alaska teacher graduates

As a follow-up question, each invitee was asked to identify an action that they or their organization could offer. Their responses follow:

- Research: provide best practices to support change efforts and provide research and evaluation of efforts on outcomes
- Help make a connection between the schools and the communities
- Provide structure through policies in recruitment, training, evaluation, and retention
- Find members who can provide the expertise
- Work with Alaska State Board of Education to share expectations and concerns; draft a teacher preparation plan
- Assist in developing state capacity for longitudinal data collection and analysis
- Incorporate educator development strategies through outreach and early awareness tools and resources
- Build knowledge of Native community, culture, and history through partnership with schools and UA

- Provide honesty to students and advisors regarding progress or lack of progress
- Review and refine the partnerships in process; build state entities into that process
- Communicate with other campuses and colleges regarding services offered or in development
- Ensure that each K-12 graduate knows the recently adopted K-12 Standards
- Advocate for changes (as suggested in these bullets) within UA for teacher education; communicate UA efforts to legislators
- Advocate for resources within UA for teacher education
- Help ensure the input from this group is being pursued and that UA members report back on progress.

The Alaska Teacher Education Consortium concluded its meeting at 2:00 pm and agreed to these follow-up actions:

1. Teleconference call Monday, October 1, 4 pm – Rick Caulfield
2. Identify the status of Native paraprofessionals in SE schools – Rosita Worl
3. On behalf of ACPE, consider ways to strengthen secondary to postsecondary AKCIS content and advocate for content enhancements – Diane Barrans
4. Report out on teacher retention research – Diane Hirshberg

## Appendix E: Why Aren't They Teaching?

### A Study of Why Some University of Alaska Teacher Education Graduates Aren't in Classrooms

#### Introduction

Alaska Statute 14.40.190(b), passed as Senate Bill 241 in 2008, requires the University of Alaska (UA) Board of Regents to submit a report each regular session titled Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools that "describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers." In 2012 this report documented that approximately 50% of UA initial teacher preparation graduates did not teach in Alaska public schools after completing their programs. Unfortunately, the data available could not tell us the reasons why so many graduates were not employed as teachers. In response to legislators' questions about this, the three UA Education deans (with support from the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research) made a commitment to conduct a 2012 research project to understand why graduates of UA initial teacher preparation programs did or did not teach in Alaska public schools after completing their programs. This project was conducted in response to that commitment.

#### Existing Research

There is a lack of research on reasons why initial teacher preparation graduates are not teaching across the nation. Much of the current research addresses retention issues of new teachers rather than initial employment of them. However, media outlets throughout the United States (Collins, 2011; Eaton, 2011; Hamilton, 2011; Roberts, 2011) and other countries (Dedyna, 2011; *Fairfax NZ News*, 2012; Fergus, 2012; Lepkowska, 2011) report teacher hiring freezes, school budget cuts, teacher layoffs, oversupply of teacher graduates or oversupply in low-demand areas, and stiff competition for few positions as the reasons new teachers cannot find jobs.

Some recent research has been conducted with regard to oversupply. Sawchuk (2013) explored the potential effects and policy issues related to an oversupply of new teachers, particularly elementary teachers, and discussed the supply and demand mismatch. He stated, "data, while imprecise, suggest that some states are producing far more new teachers at the elementary level than will be able to find jobs in their respective states--even as districts struggle to find enough recruits in other certification fields" (p. 1). Similarly, Ontario College of Teachers Transition to Teaching Study (2012) found "that the years of oversupply of teachers in Ontario negatively affected new teacher job outcomes more and more each year," and "each new group of teachers has entered an increasingly competitive job market" (p. 3).

In addition, a U.S. Census Bureau Report (2007) explored reasons that adults with bachelor's degrees might not be working<sup>5</sup>. Respondents who specified a reason other than retirement were most likely to cite taking care of children/others (35%), going to school (12%), chronic illness/disability (10.3%), inability to find work (6.6%), and no interest in working (5.8%). Other

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<sup>5</sup> Adults aged 20 to 64, not working, 2004

reasons included temporary injury or illness (2%) and pregnancy/childbirth (1.5%). These reasons mirror what we had heard anecdotally from Alaska-prepared teachers who were not working.

### Methodology

To look more systematically at why some UA-prepared teachers are not employed in the classroom, we surveyed recent graduates about their employment and interviewed a sample of those who reported they were not teaching. The interview sample was chosen to include graduates of all UA initial teacher education program areas. We received 113 survey responses (a 27% response rate) and interviewed 21 of those respondents. We also interviewed human resource personnel who represented the five districts hiring the largest number of UA graduates.

### Results - Online Graduate Survey

Of the 113 respondents to our survey, 90% applied for a teaching certificate upon completion of their program. The 10% who did not apply were not seeking a teaching job and cited travel, pursuit of other interests, acceptance or continuation of employment in nonteaching jobs, lack of available teaching jobs, or simply no desire to teach.

Answer	Response	%
employed as a teacher	47	41%
working as a substitute teacher	33	29%
working in some other education job	17	15%
working in a job outside of education	12	11%
not working	4	4%
Total	113	100%

The fall immediately following their graduation, 95% of our respondents were employed. More than 4 out of 5 respondents (84%) worked in some type of education job, although only 41% were teachers (see table below). Of those respondents working in education, 14% worked in early childhood (pre-K) settings, 64% worked in elementary (K-6), and 66% in middle/high school settings.

About 72% of the 107 who were employed worked in an Alaska school, 10% worked in a school outside of Alaska, 5% worked in a childcare organization, and 13% were employed by some other business or organization within or outside Alaska. Once we account for unemployed graduates, those working part time, those working in non-teaching positions, and those working outside Alaska public schools, just 34 of the 113 graduates (30%) were working full-time as teachers in Alaska public schools the fall after their graduation.

The most frequently cited reasons for choosing to teach outside Alaska (10% of respondents) were family and personal issues, such as relocation of a spouse for work or education. Two respondents

indicated they had no desire to live in Alaska and another wanted a change in scenery and climate. Two respondents indicated they were unable to find employment in Alaska, and two pursued international teaching opportunities.

We asked the 60% of our respondents (68 of 113) who were not employed as teachers the fall following graduation about their job searches (67 of the 68 responded to these questions). More than 70% of them (48) had applied for a teaching job immediately after graduation. The 19 who did not apply most frequently cited going back to school for advanced education, lack of job availability, and uncertainty about teaching in the current educational system. Other reasons, such as staying home to have a baby, needing a break, transferring with the military, accepting a position in a private school, and waiting on an institutional recommendation and teacher certificate were given by just one or two respondents. About half of those not employed as teachers (9 out of 19) later searched for a teaching job.

Answer	Response	%
Anchorage School District	21	44%
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	9	19%
Mat-Su Borough School District	10	21%
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	8	17%
Juneau School District	10	21%
Other Alaska public schools	8	17%
Schools outside Alaska	10	21%
Alaska non-public schools	3	6%

Of the 48 who did apply for teaching jobs immediately following graduation, more than 40% (21) applied to the Anchorage School District. About 20% (9-10) each applied to Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, the Juneau School District, the Mat-Su Borough School District, and schools outside Alaska. A little less than 20% (8) each applied to the Kenai Borough School District and other school districts in Alaska. Only about 6% (3) applied to Alaska non-public schools. Of these 48, 3 got a teaching job, 43 continued to try to get one, and only 2 stopped looking for teaching jobs.

We asked all those who had searched for a teaching job either immediately after graduation or later about their willingness to relocate. Of those 58 graduates, almost 60% were not able to relocate because they needed to stay in their home community. Of the approximately 40% (25 respondents) who were willing to relocate, 10 indicated they would teach in another state, 5 cited anywhere in Alaska, 5 indicated southcentral, and 2 indicated southeast. Six others indicated specified and unspecified caveats on other locations in Alaska. One expressed interest in relocating to a foreign country. Most respondents (23 of 25) also identified places they were unwilling to relocate. While 3 said they would not be willing to leave Alaska, 15 said they would not move to some or all of rural Alaska. Family/personal reasons and environment (including weather, lifestyle, and teaching/living

conditions) were the major reasons respondents would not be willing to relocate to specific areas. Out of the 68 who did not get a teaching job the fall immediately following graduation, 54 gave us one or more reasons for why they were not hired. By far the most frequent answer was competition, lack of jobs, or both, cited by almost two-thirds (35 of the 54) of our respondents. Seven were unwilling to relocate and a few (2 to 4 for each reason) cited lack of experience, lack of interviewing skills, moving, having a baby, and didn't apply.

### **Results - Interviews with Non-teaching Graduates**

We interviewed 21 of our survey respondents who were not employed as teachers the fall immediately following graduation to explore why this was the case in more depth. All UA initial teacher preparation programs were represented.

Reflecting the answers above, about 80% (17) indicated there were limited teaching job opportunities, which included comments related to no openings, no offers, district budget constraints, and competition/lack of experience. Adding to those answers, one-third (7) listed other opportunities, such as travel, employment in nonteaching jobs, and family as reasons. Third, slightly less than 20% (4) expressed uncertainty about teaching. (Percentages do not equal 100 because many respondents provided multiple reasons.)

Two-thirds of those interviewed were substitute teaching, with only two indicating they were not working with children at all. Those working with children, but not as substitute teachers, cited such activities as volunteering (reading at school events and instructing rock climbing and pottery classes), working outside the home (Head Start, paraprofessional, after-school program, special education TA and Indian education tutor), and working with children in a home setting. Six of the graduates were employed in jobs that do not require teacher certification. These included research assistant, preparatory college course instructor, paraprofessional, librarian, after-school program coordinator, and physical therapy assistant. A majority of those interviewed (13) indicated that they were still seeking teacher employment, most of whom (11) used district web sites as a job resource. Other resources they used included Alaska Teacher Placement (4), word of mouth (2), substitute teaching, job fairs, Craigslist, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development website, ALEXsys, and a Facebook page maintained by a graduate cohort group.

When asked what UA could do to assist in their search for employment, the most frequent response (8 of the 21) was nothing or "I don't know." Two graduates recommended resume writing help, and one each recommended help with classroom management, assessment, interviewing practice, cover letter writing, job hunting protocol (who to contact), information about job fairs and job openings, clarification of the certification process, and honesty about the bleak job opportunities.

### **Results - Key Informant Interviews**

To gain an additional perspective on UA graduates, we interviewed human resource personnel from the five Alaska school districts that hire the largest number of UA graduates (Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Mat-Su). These key informants have general knowledge of the quality of teachers hired by their districts. When asked how well prepared they found UA graduates, two were

complimentary, two were neutral, and one was uncomplimentary. Paraphrased statements are included below.

- UA graduates pass screening interviews at a higher rate than the general population.
- We have had great success with UA graduates. Very few need assistance due to poor teacher evaluations.
- UA graduates are as prepared as well as any other traditional university program. There is no significant advantage to hiring a UA graduate.
- It depends on the graduate. The quality is more influenced by their preparation throughout life rather than what an education program provides.
- UA graduates are below average compared to other institutions.

Later in the interview, one of the neutral key informants indicated that the district had always been pleased with UA graduates with only a few exceptions, and thought that student teaching in the district made the transition to teaching comfortable for UA graduates.

Key informants reported both consistent strengths and weaknesses of UA graduates. Strengths included understanding the environment and diverse student populations of the district, role of the general education teacher working with ELL students, classroom management, assessment, and the connection between instruction and assessment. Other strengths cited were a passion for teaching, love of students, interest and passion for being in education, and knowledge of the state and the district in which they have applied. One key informant indicated that there were no consistent strengths that set UA graduates apart. Weaknesses included preparation in special education, instructional practices, literacy integration at the secondary level, and the role of the general education teacher in working with special education students. One informant reported that UA graduates seemed to have an “inherent belief” that they should automatically get jobs in the local district, and he conveyed that such an entitlement attitude was a consistent weakness. Two key informants indicated that there were no consistent weaknesses, but one of these indicated more preparation in dealing with diverse populations would be beneficial.

When asked if they shared their perceptions of graduates with UA personnel, two indicated little or no interaction with the university closest to them, one indicated participation on a statewide committee that included representation from all UA college/schools of education, one served on a college advisory board, and another had regular communication with the local campus.

Finally, key informants were asked if there were anything else UA should know related to their experiences with interviewing and hiring graduates. Two of the informants had no response. Responses by the other three informants are paraphrased below.

- UA graduates are quite prepared. The regular meetings with university students and faculty are helpful. We discuss what we look for in graduates and what is important during interviews.
- One of the larger school districts in Alaska hires the best candidates before other smaller districts have an opportunity to view them.

- Graduates from the UAA campus were late submitting their applications, which caused them to miss some job opportunities.
- The overall quality of UAS graduates appears to be less than that of UAA and UAF. The number of eligible candidates from UAS has decreased over time.
- UA has done a much better job of processing institutional recommendations more quickly.

### Discussion

The results of our research held few surprises. Our experience with the UA initial teacher preparation programs, with teacher candidates and with colleagues in the districts that hire most of our graduates had indicated that UA teacher education graduates, on the whole, are prepared to teach and want to work as teachers. We knew that some graduates did not go into teaching because they left the state, had children, or could not find a job in their home district and were unable to relocate. Our surveys and interviews confirmed both that UA teacher graduates were prepared to teach, and that the reasons they did not mirrored those we had heard anecdotally.

This raises the question of why so many of our graduates don't find employment, yet districts import so many teachers from out of state. Looking at new-to-district hires in 2012, we see that just 23% of new hires for teaching positions in the state's five largest districts<sup>6</sup> were from out of state, compared with 70% of hires in the remaining 48 districts. And while over half of total district hires in the five largest districts were new teachers already in Alaska, just 3% of hires in other districts were new teachers in Alaska. So teachers looking for jobs in urban Alaska can't find them, and districts looking to hire teachers for rural Alaska have to look outside the state.

	Big 5 Districts			All Other Districts		
	FTE of New District Hires					
	Experienced	New Teacher	Total	Experienced	New Teacher	Total
Alaskan	87	229	316	126	12	138
New to State	47	45	92	135	190	325
Total	134	274	408	261	202	463
Percent of New District Hires						
Alaskan	21%	56%	77%	27%	3%	30%
New to State	12%	11%	23%	29%	41%	70%
Total	33%	67%	100%	56%	44%	100%

Source: EED Certified Staff Data, FY12

In addition to this place mismatch between available job locations and UA graduates willing to teach in those locations, there is some subject mismatch as well. As the table below shows, the same number of elementary education respondents secured jobs as teachers as secondary respondents;

<sup>6</sup> Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matanuska-Susitna, Kenai, and Juneau

but nearly 40% more of our respondents were prepared as elementary teachers than as secondary teachers<sup>7</sup>. Likewise, although there were only seven special educators among our respondents, over 50% of them had teaching jobs the fall after graduation.

	Elementary		Secondary		Regular education*		Special education	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Teaching	19	35%	19	48%	41	37%	4	58%
Substitute teaching	18	33%	10	25%	33	31%		0%
Other education job	12	22%	4	10%	16	15%	1	14%
Non-education job	3	6%	4	10%	11	10%	1	14%
Not working	2	4%	3	7%	5	7%	1	14%
Total	54	100%	40	100%	106	100%	7	100%

\*Includes early childhood and K-12.

National and Alaska researchers have long documented that teacher shortages are both location and subject-specific (NCREL, 2000; McDiarmid, 2003), and these data are in line with those findings. While UA graduates are generally prepared to teach, there are some graduates who are less prepared, as reflected by one of our key informants. The largest factor, though, seems to be that too many graduates are competing for the limited positions in the state’s largest districts, and too few are able to relocate to rural and remote schools where districts need more applicants. Another factor in graduates’ difficulty finding jobs is that too many UA students are choosing elementary education, and too few are choosing hard-to-fill areas such as special education, secondary math, and secondary science, a common supply-and-demand mismatch issue faced by many states (Sawchuk, 2013).

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<sup>7</sup> Our respondents mirror UA teacher education graduates very closely on this measure. From AY 2007-2008 to AY 2011-2012, UA prepared about 50% more elementary teachers than secondary – an average of 117 per year elementary and 77 per year secondary.

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## Appendix F: SB 241 legislation

### AN ACT

1 Relating to a report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the  
2 Board of Regents of the University of Alaska; and providing for an effective date.

3

4 \* **Section 1.** AS 14.40.190 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

5 (b) In addition to the report required under (a) of this section, the Board of  
6 Regents shall prepare and present to the legislative committees having jurisdiction  
7 over education an annual report, not later than the 30th legislative day of each regular  
8 session of the legislature, titled "Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools" that  
9 describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public  
10 school teachers. The report must include an outline of the university's current and  
11 future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the  
12 state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training. The information  
13 reported under this subsection may also include short-term and five-year strategies

Enrolled SB 241 -2-

1 with accompanying fiscal notes and outcome measures.

2 \* **Sec. 2.** AS 14.40.190(b) is repealed and reenacted to read:

3 (b) In addition to the report required under (a) of this section, the Board of  
4 Regents shall prepare and present to the legislative committees having jurisdiction  
5 over education a biennial report, not later than the 30th legislative day of the first  
6 session of each legislature, titled "Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools" that  
7 describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public  
8 school teachers. The report must include an outline of the university's current and  
9 future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the  
10 state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training. The information  
11 reported under this subsection may also include short-term and five-year strategies  
12 with accompanying fiscal notes and outcome measures.

13 \* **Sec. 3.** AS 14.40.250 is amended to read:

14 **Sec. 14.40.250. Regents to act as trustees and administer money or**  
15 **property.** The Board of Regents may receive, manage, and invest money or other real,  
16 personal, or mixed property for the purpose of the University of Alaska, its  
17 improvement or adornment, or the aid or advantage of students or faculty, and, in  
18 general, may act as trustee on behalf of the University of Alaska for any of these  
19 purposes. The regents shall prepare a written report, in accordance with  
20 **AS 14.40.190(a)** [AS 14.40.190], as to the administration and disposition of money  
21 received under this section.

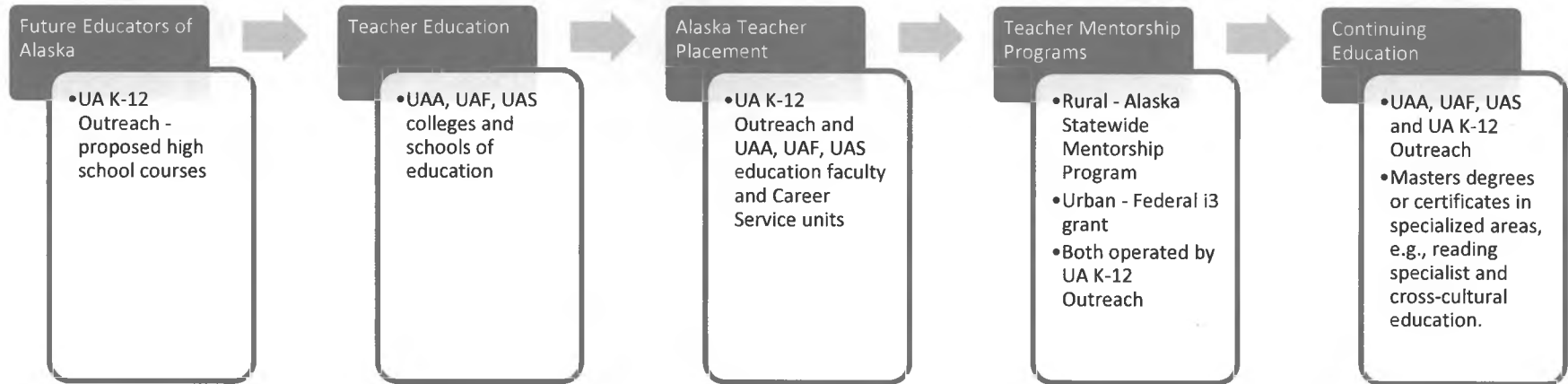
22 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 37.25.010(d) is amended to read:

23 (d) The University of Alaska shall, in the report required under  
24 **AS 14.40.190(a)** [AS 14.40.190], report the amount of university receipts received in  
25 one year and expended in the succeeding fiscal year.

26 \* **Sec. 5.** Section 2 of this Act takes effect July 1, 2012.

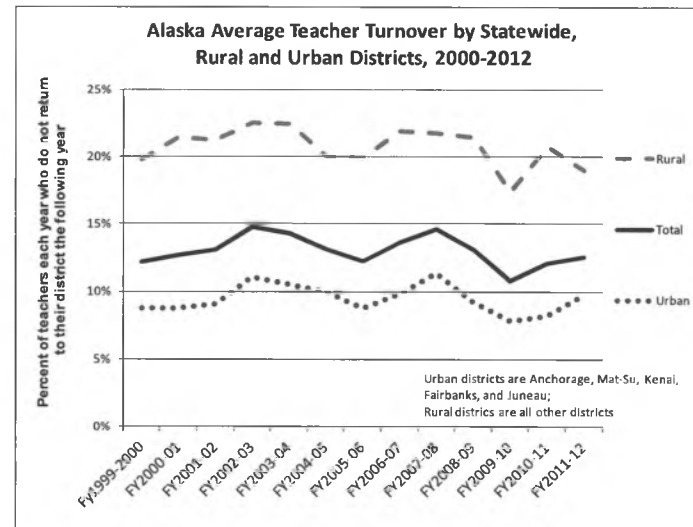
For additional information or copies of the report, please contact Dana Thomas, Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Alaska, at [dlthomas@alaska.edu](mailto:dlthomas@alaska.edu) or Regent Michael Powers, Chair of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee, University of Alaska Board of Regents, at [mpowers7@alaska.edu](mailto:mpowers7@alaska.edu).

## UA's Role in Teacher Education, Recruitment and Retention



UA education faculty, the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR), and UA K-12 Outreach conduct research along this full spectrum with an emphasis on culturally relevant education for Alaskans.

Recruitment - Average Annual Hires FY2009-2012			
	Experienced teachers	New teachers	Total
Alaskans	504	211	715
Non-Alaskans	153	217	370
<b>Total</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>1085</b>



# Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools

## 1. Introduction – Regent Mike Powers

- a. Introductions – those at the table, those in the audience, and those contributing to the report
- b. The purpose of this report (AS 14.40.190(b)) and the biennial reporting cycle
- c. Relation to UA’s Strategic Direction Initiative (SDI)– Productive Partnerships with Alaska’s Schools  
(See <http://www.alaska.edu/shapingalaskasfuture/what-is-sdi/>)

## 2. Teacher Recruitment – UA Vice President for Academic Affairs Dana Thomas

- a. Increasing the interest in the teaching profession and placing graduates into jobs; the roles of Future Educators of Alaska, education faculty and staff, student teaching experience, and Alaska Teacher Placement
- b. Annual teaching position vacancies related to UA graduates and out-of-state hires
- c. Why aren’t more graduates teaching? CAEPR survey
- d. Challenges – Will school districts hire this year?

## 3. Teacher Education – UAS Provost Rick Caulfield

- a. Description of programs – NCATE accreditation, access to programs across the state, etc.
- b. Numbers of graduates and trends generally and for special education
- c. Alaska Teacher Education Consortium work to improve teacher education

## 4. Teacher Retention - UA Vice President for Academic Affairs Dana Thomas

- a. Trends in teacher turnover
- b. Causes of teacher turnover
- c. Growing our own and placing them to improve retention

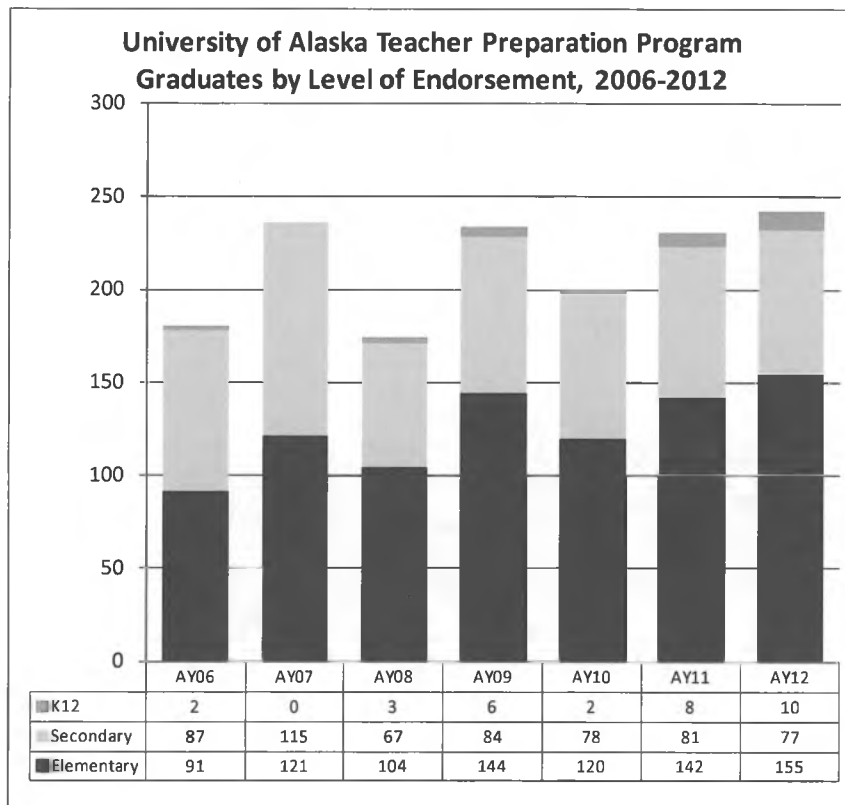
## 5. Questions – All

**UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA**  
**SB241 REPORT—*Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools***  
**Presented to the 28<sup>th</sup> Alaska Legislature**  
**February 27, 2013**

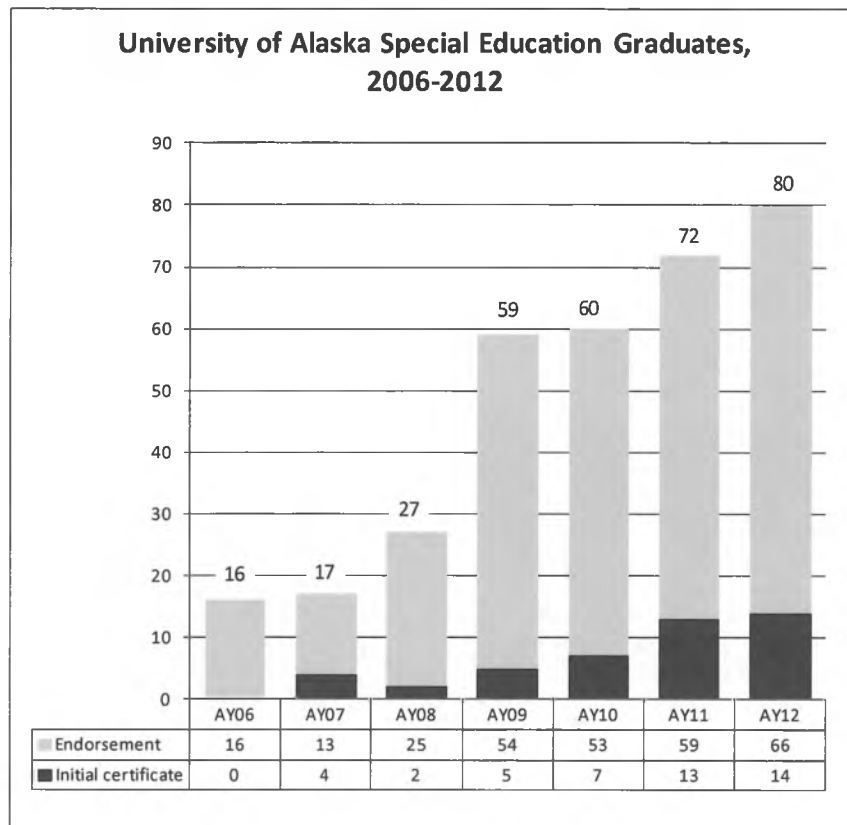
**UA Teacher Preparation Program Highlights**

- 1) All three major academic units—UAA, UAF, UAS—offer teacher preparation programs in both face-to-face and online/e-Learning formats
- 2) The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), one of two federally-recognized organizations nationally that approves teacher education programs, has approved UA programs for accreditation. Approval requires an intensive self-study, engagement with school districts and the Department of Education and Early Development, and includes a site visit by national evaluators
- 3) All UA education students in initial certification programs must pass the nationally-recognized *Praxis I* and *Praxis II* exams before they enter student teaching, and they must pass one or more Praxis II content area exams in order to receive an institutional recommendation for state licensure
- 4) UA Education programs offer initial certification in elementary, secondary, and special education. UAA also offers initial certification in early childhood education, and early childhood special education
- 5) All three programs offer endorsements and certificates for already-certified teachers in specialized areas including reading specialist, cross-cultural education, special education
- 6) Students from communities across Alaska can complete their Education degree online, including the Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and Special Education. At the graduate level they can earn the Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Education, Masters of Special Education, and Educational Leadership/Principal Certification
- 7) UAA, UAF, and UAS all offer ongoing professional development opportunities for educators, both face-to-face and online, and commonly in partnership with districts, the State's Department of Education and Early Development, and national educators
- 8) All programs include an emphasis on growing the number of Alaska Native teachers
- 9) Education faculty have made special efforts in recent years to target the greatest needs for new teachers in special education and STEM fields
- 10) Alaska Teacher Education Consortium (ATEC), with broad statewide representation, meets March 26 to continue improvements in UA teacher preparation

**FIGURE 1: UA TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES, 2006-2012**



**FIGURE 2: UA SPECIAL EDUCATION GRADUATES, 2006-2012**





# Alaska Statewide Mentor Project

**RESEARCH SUMMARY**  
2004-2012



## 2012-2013 Alaska Statewide Mentor Project: Mentors, Coordinators, and Staff

(Front row, from left to right) Stacey Woolsey, Debbie Hawkins, Barbara Adams, Betty Walters; (second row) Texas Gail Raymond, Pat Odin, Abby Augustine, Christine Walker, LuAnne Nelson, Kellie Wannamaker, Maureen Petrunic, Chris Jencks, Bev Lewanski, Cindy Lou Aillaud, Judy Youngquist, Marc Robinson, Cathé Rhodes; (third row) Ed Sotelo, Mary Downs, Brenda Luthi, Marcia Indahl, Lisa Stewart, Carol H. Jerue, Katy Odneal, Liz Will, Cynthia Petrovich, Judy Olsen; (fourth row) Dave Schmitz, Lori Koutsky, Kathie Steele, Marilyn White, Ann Ness, Karen Doyle, Jenny Carlson, Charlie Costello, Hal Neace, Trish Johnston; (fifth row) Kathy Berry Bertram, Don Campbell, Eric Muehling, Dave Boyd, Cyndy Curran, Morgan Gray, Glenda Findlay. (Not pictured) Pat McDonald, Kathleen Wright, Renée Helie, Joe Jordan, Craig Baldwin, Michelle Thomason, Toni McFadden, Casey Demmert.



## About the Project

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project (ASMP) is a partnership between the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development and the University of Alaska system. It is designed to induct early career teachers (ECTs) into the field of teaching through professional learning environments based on the norms of collaboration, high expectations, equity, ongoing inquiry, and reflective practice. Mentors receive extensive ongoing training enabling them to support ECTs through formative assessment tools used to collaborate with ECTs toward identifying their needs and meeting their goals, weekly contact at a distance, and monthly face-to-face visits.

## Table of Contents

- 2 Research Goals by Funding Source
- 3 Project Numbers since Inception
- 4 A Study of Mid-Career Teachers Mentored by ASMP
- 6 Studying Student Achievement and Teacher Mentoring
- 7 Measuring Teacher Growth
- 8 Narrowing the Gap in Rural Teacher Retention
- 9 Annual Surveys
- 10 Survey of Superintendents
- 11 Open-Ended Responses from Site Administrators
- 12 Open-Ended Responses from Early Career Teachers

## Alaska Statewide Mentors

Alaska Statewide Mentors are experienced teachers from across the state who have dedicated time to work with early career teachers during their first and second year as classroom teachers. Alaska Statewide Mentors work toward achieving the long-term goals of increasing teacher retention and improving student achievement by providing instructional mentoring and support to ECTs, helping them find inspiration and stay energized in their new profession. Foundational to the success of ASMP, the mentoring relationship is not evaluative and employs a formative assessment system to guide teacher practice. An Alaska Statewide Mentor is a knowledgeable confidant, problem solver, personal professional support, and a co-teacher to model lessons that demonstrate teaching strategies aligned with the needs of real students.

## ASMP Research

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project strongly believes in and practices making data-driven decisions and conducting research. ASMP collects data to answer a variety of questions as well as to measure the effectiveness of the project in terms of meeting its goals. Ongoing research continues to investigate the project's accomplishments more deeply and cohesively with each study. Qualitative, quantitative, and descriptive data are gathered on participants to study the effect of ASMP on teacher retention and student achievement. Research to guide programmatic changes include evaluations for each mentor professional development session, and annual online surveys of ECTs, their site administrators, and ASMP mentors administered by an external agency.



## Research Goals by Funding Source

Data are gathered on a regular basis and analyzed by the ASMP research team to update and further develop our understanding of known topics of concern. Topics include outcomes such as yearly teacher retention, long term (5-year) teacher retention, and early career teacher growth. Student achievement is always at the core of ASMP mentoring and these types of studies often are performed over multiple years. ASMP program improvements are based on event evaluations, mentor focus groups, and online surveys of teachers, mentors, and site administrators. ASMP implementation, including connections to standards (teaching, student content, culturally responsive) is analyzed through implementation forms and satisfaction data gathered by online surveys.

### Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (EED)

The Research Team conducts studies of interest to the ASMP partnership between EED and UA. Recent research funded through EED will focus on the effects of ASMP mentoring on special education teachers and the academic achievement of their students. By 2015, the goal of this research is to replicate the 2009 SBA study for this subset of participants served by ASMP.

### Alaska Humanities Forum (AKHF)

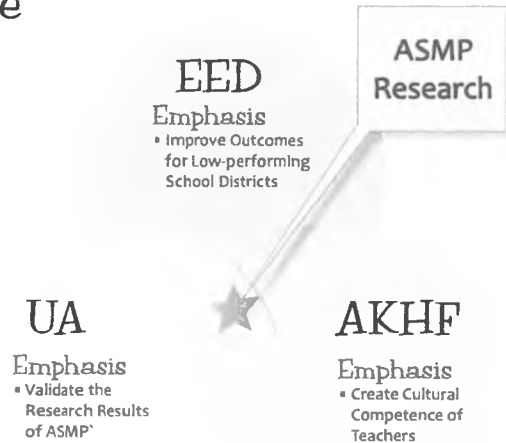
The ASMP Research Team will supply data to the evaluators of the Alaska Humanities Forum's Creating Cultural Competence (C3) grant. ASMP data will merge with AKHF datasets to investigate how creating cultural competence in early career teachers affects teacher retention, teacher satisfaction, and student achievement for participants from two rural districts: Lower Kuskokwim and Northwest Arctic Borough School Districts.

### University of Alaska (UA)

In 2011, the US Department of Education funded ASMP's Urban Growth Opportunity (UGO) with an Investments in Innovation (i3) grant. UGO external evaluators will gather and analyze data specifically for urban districts. The study includes the following components of the program:

- urban mentor selection
- urban mentor professional development
- urban mentor – ECT interaction (distance and in person, relationships, responsiveness)
- urban mentor use of formative assessment system to support teacher professional growth

These components address the ASMP outcomes of retention, growth, and student achievement for teachers in urban districts. This validation experiment will enable external evaluators to measure the ASMP model's fidelity of implementation, and to assess the differences between ASMP ECTs and a comparison group of urban first- and second-year teachers who do not receive ASMP mentoring. (See page 6 for a fuller discussion of the UGO study)

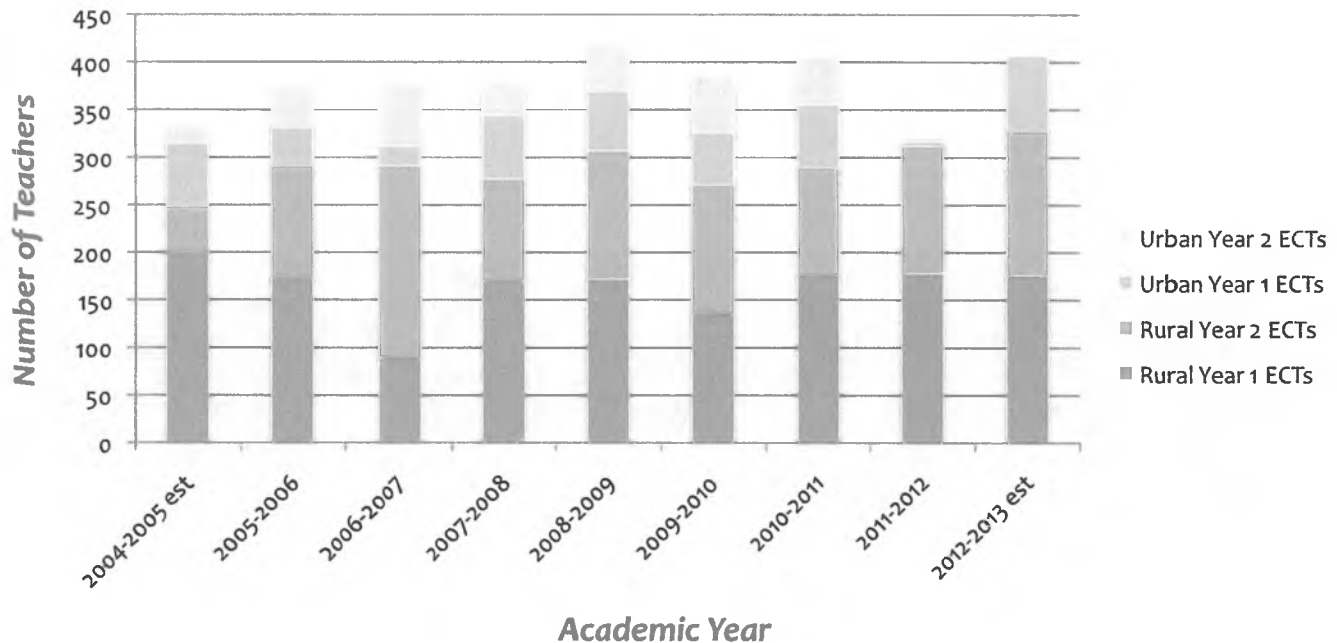




## Project Numbers since Inception

Project numbers since inception have remained consistent, serving on average about 380 early career teachers (ECTs) a year. In the beginning years of the project about 75% of the ECTs served by ASMP were from rural districts with the remaining 25% from the top five largest urban districts in the state. Due to funding changes in the Fall of 2011, ASMP served primarily rural districts (97% of ECTs) in academic year 2011-2012 (AY12) and then an increased amount of urban teachers again in AY13 (80% rural, 20% urban). Overall, ASMP has served over 2,100 individual ECTs through training 108 experienced Alaska teachers as high-quality mentors through AY13.

### Distribution of Teachers Served by ASMP



Over 8 years, ASMP has been invited into 52 of the 54 school districts within the state to serve their early career teachers. To date, nearly 70% of all schools (345 by the end of AY12) have been served by the project at least one year.



## A Study of Mid-Career Teachers Mentored by ASMP

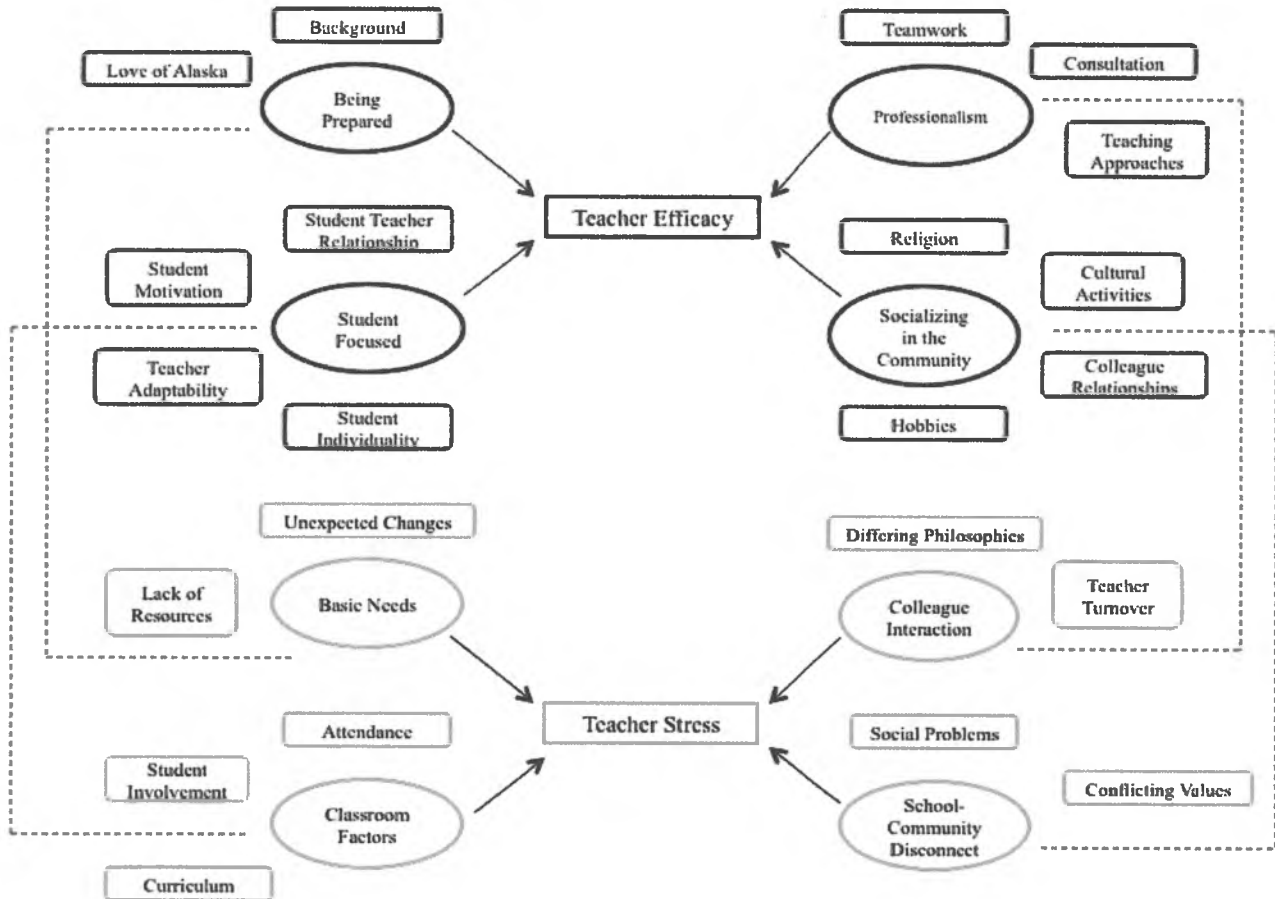
One example of going deeper with teacher retention analysis is to investigate the success of early career teachers served in 2004–2005 and 2005–2006 school years who are still teaching in the state after five years or longer. Longitudinal retention rates are calculated to see how the improvements in yearly retention influence long-term success. This “mid-career teacher” study focused on determining the five-year retention rates of early career teachers served by ASMP, and the factors that allowed the teachers to be successful and remain teaching within the state. Of the teachers served by ASMP in the first two years of the project, 56% remained teaching in Alaska’s public K-12 school system after 5 years. Interviews were conducted with 13 of these teachers who were randomly sampled from the list. The questions centered around teacher efficacy, the belief that the teacher can make a positive influence on students in terms of learning. Results revealed that teachers experienced efficacy based upon a number of factors, including teacher preparation, professional development, community engagement, and using a student-specific focus (shown in black circles). These components of teacher efficacy also contributed to the teachers’ ability to cope with the stressors associated with teaching in Alaska (parallel factors shown in orange circles).

Some of dominant themes contributing to teacher efficacy include the following:

- **Being Prepared**  
*Background, love of Alaska, appreciating rural lifestyles*—experience working with minority populations; living in rural areas; going to school in Alaska, or growing up in Alaska; having a “love” of Alaska, such as appreciating the lifestyle of “living in the bush” or “the village lifestyle”.
- **Being Professional**  
*Teamwork, consultation, teaching approaches*—sharing a philosophy of education; collaborating with one another; utilizing outside resources, such as working with other professionals, organizations, and community members; inviting native elders into the classroom to share their knowledge. Many teachers also described how they consulted with their ASMP mentor, and how this was helpful in obtaining a sense of teacher efficacy. In particular, they described how their mentor was one of the ways in which they learned about different teaching approaches—the creative strategies teachers use to manage their classroom, such as utilizing rubrics, having structure, and working out systems of teaching that synthesize and integrate curriculum from different subjects.
- **Socializing in the Community**  
*Religion, cultural activities, hobbies, colleague relationships*—participating at church gatherings, potlatches, Alaska Native dances, hunting and/or fishing; fostering personal interests and activities such as playing hockey or walking on sea ice; colleagues supporting, relying on, visiting, or participating in activities with one another.
- **Being Student-focused**  
*Student-teacher relationships, student motivation, teacher adaptability, student individuality*—trying to connect personally by finding out about the students interests; recognizing intrinsic student motivation; adapting culturally biased or inappropriate classroom curriculum, their teaching style, or how course content is presented appropriate to the situation; viewing each student as their own individual, then working to meet the student’s specific needs.



### Teacher Efficacy Model

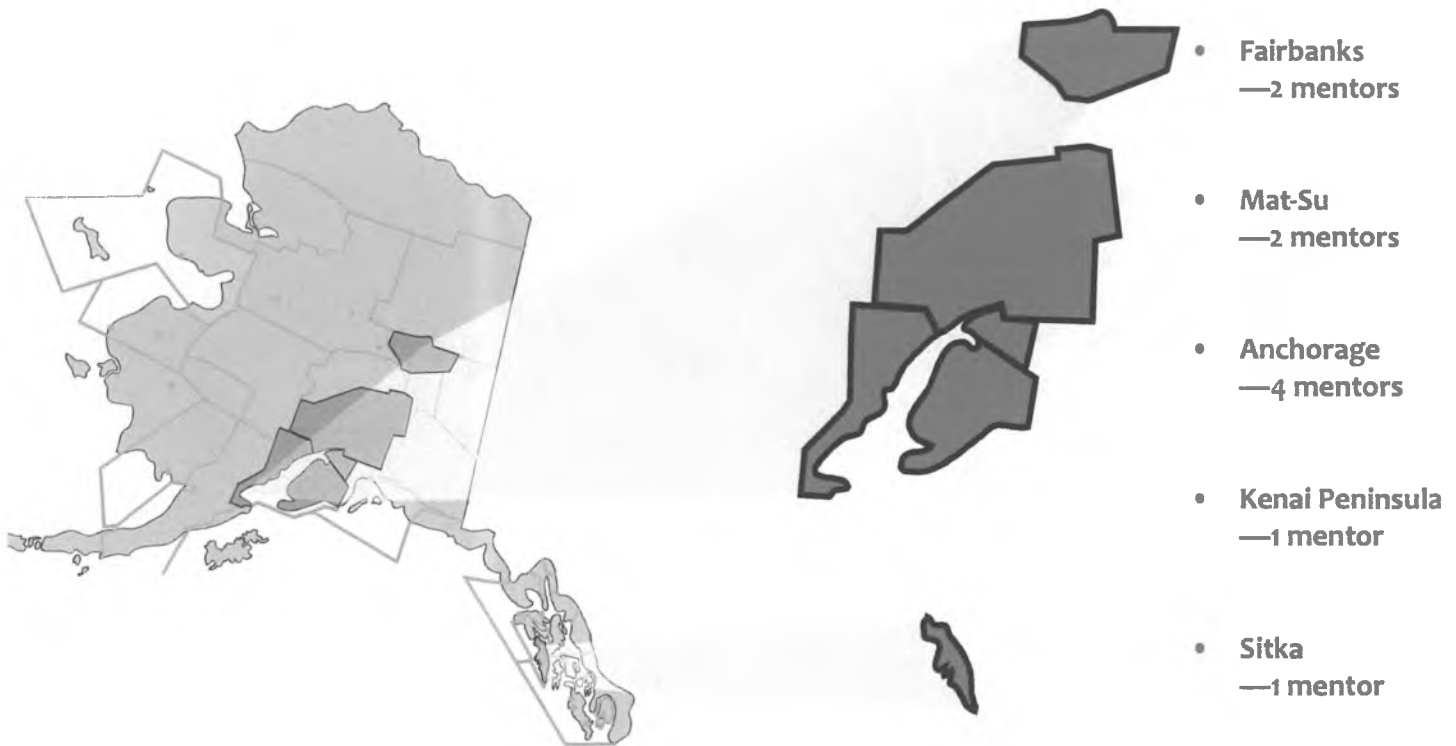


*Early career teachers in Alaska are met with various stressors. By looking at teachers who stay in the profession and in the state, this study has identified elements that can mitigate these stressors and increase teachers' feeling of efficacy.*



## Studying Student Achievement and Teacher Mentoring

With the promising results from the 2009 ASMP student achievement study, the U.S. Department of Education awarded funding to the project through an “Investments in Innovation” Grant starting in January 2012. The grant expands the mentoring services that are primarily provided in Alaska’s rural districts to urban districts, and is titled the Urban Growth Opportunity (UGO). Funding allows a larger number of early career teachers in urban districts to be served while randomly assigning them to various types of mentoring models, either the ASMP model or the “Business As Usual” model—whatever is currently in place within that district. The randomization provides the most objective research possible. Whereas the 2009 ASMP student achievement study compared the results from ECTs’ classrooms to their veteran counterparts, all participants in the UGO study are early career teachers. The grant is considered a validation grant, meaning that there is a good model in place that needs to be substantiated in other situations. If the model is found to be effective in urban Alaska, it is possible that other states may adopt the model as well. The goals of the study are to measure the impact of the ASMP mentoring model on teacher retention, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement.



**Urban Districts Participating in the UGO Study**



## Measuring Teacher Growth

ASMP measures teacher effectiveness through a growth model grounded in teaching standards. Mentors work with the early career teachers (ECTs) weekly through distance communication. Mentors visit and observe ECT classrooms monthly, discussing data gathered and collaboratively determining next steps. Often, a mentor is the professional most connected to an ECT's practice. For this reason, mentors played an important role in developing the tool used to measure teacher growth within ASMP.

Through focus group sessions with mentors, a scale was developed by the ASMP Research Team using observable classroom practices. This tool includes a starting point and growth rate for a teachers' professional practice, considerations for the influence (or not) of ASMP, and key traits of the teacher and situation that allow professional growth.

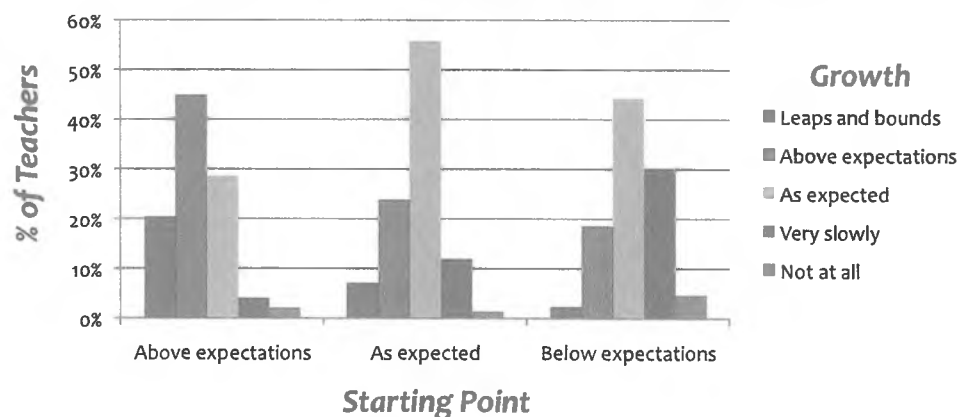
To measure growth, ASMP first determines a starting point for each ECT. Using teaching standards and data gathered over the first two months of interactions with ECTs, mentors categorize the teachers' professional practice "As Expected", "Above" or "Below Expectations" for a first- or second-year teacher. Rather than an indicator of the teachers' preparation program or their quality as a teacher, this tool characterizes where an ECT falls on a continuum specific to their teaching situation (school, community, grade, content). This descriptive continuum includes many professional practices, ranging from classroom management to planning lessons to developing as a professional. The charge given to an ASMP mentor is to move an ECT's practice forward, from good to great. Most ECTs fall into the "As Expected" category for a starting point. In AY12, 71% of the 320 ECTs with teacher effectiveness scores started where they were expected to be as an early career teacher (15% above and 13% below). This pattern is similar to those found in the two previous years as well (not depicted).

Growth is measured by again referencing the teaching standards, verified through data gathered throughout the year, and organized and reassessed at the end of the year. Since ASMP is non-evaluative, descriptors such as growing "Leaps and Bounds" or "Very Slowly" were used so that mentors focus on observable practices, not on evaluating the performance of a teacher. The graph shows the distribution of ECTs based on their growth organized by starting point. Remembering that 71% of the ECTs started off in the center category, the results show that most ECTs are growing professionally at a rate "As Expected" as well.

Those starting "Above Expectations" do have more ECTs with faster growth than those starting "Below Expectations", but that is not to say that ECTs starting "Below Expectations" cannot grow. In fact, 65% of those ECTs showed growth for that year (As Expected, Above Expectations, and Leaps and Bounds).

The UGO study enables the ASMP Research Team to validate this instrument by comparing results of this data collection tool to those obtained by Education Northwest through teacher observation.

**ECT Growth by Starting Point 2011-2012**



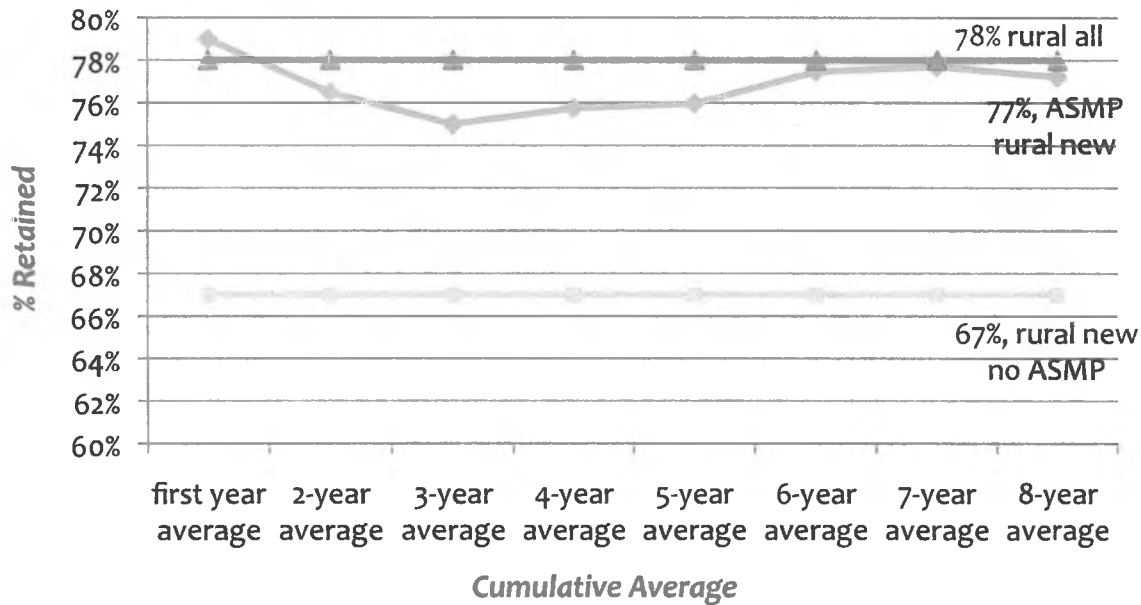


## Narrowing the Gap in Rural Teacher Retention

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project has been serving rural districts in Alaska since the 2004-2005 school year. Teacher retention is defined as a teacher remaining in the Alaska public K-12 school system from one year to the next. "Staying" means the teacher stays at the same school, stays in the same district, or even moves to a new district but stays teaching in the state. Retention is calculated on average from year to year and has fluctuated between 72% and 85% for rural teachers served by ASMP. However, the trend for rural districts retaining first- and second-year teachers who received mentoring from ASMP is leveling off at 77% over an 8-year average, as shown by the orange line in the graph.

How do we know if this is an improvement for rural teacher retention? This is an increase over the retention rates of new teachers in rural districts before ASMP mentoring, which was 67% on average as shown by the gray line (Hill & Hirshberg, 2008). More importantly, this 8-year average brings the retention rate of new teachers in rural Alaska to almost the same as the retention rate of all teachers in rural Alaska, regardless of years of experience, which is 78% according to Hill and Hirshberg.

**ASMP Trend in Rural Teacher Retention Rates**



— Hill, A., & Hirshberg, D. (2008). *Turnover among Alaska teachers: is it changing?* Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage. Research Summary No. 69.



## Annual Surveys

Each year in March, ASMP commissions the New Teacher Center (NTC) to conduct an online survey to gauge satisfaction and implementation from the perspective of the ECTs, their site administrators and the ASMP mentors. Working with the NTC survey administrator, survey questions are customized by the ASMP Research Team specific to the particular roles of those participants. In order to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention and make programmatic adjustments when necessary, ASMP collects two broad types of data:

- *quantitative*—these data lend themselves to being represented numerically, either by a count, assigned ranking, or percentage. Quantitative data are often used to determine trends within a sample from the population being studied, and can help to mitigate extreme “outlier” responses in order to establish a better understanding of the norm.
- *qualitative*—these data offer more individualized responses from participants, usually in the form of writing, and do not immediately lend themselves to be expressed numerically without further analysis. However, qualitative data do hold their own power to complete the informative picture from a human perspective, and provides fertile ground in which to situate quantitative data.

Survey Response Rates

Project Year	ECT	Mentor	Site Admin
2004-05	76%	100%	51%
2005-06	64%	100%	14%
2006-07	82%	100%	62%
2007-08	76%	100%	61%
2008-09	83%	100%	74%
2009-10	85%	100%	75%
2010-11	86%	100%	73%
2011-12	80%	100%	72%

When conducting any kind of survey instrument to measure the success of a program, meeting a response rate of at least 70% of respondents ensures reliability of results; a response rate less than 70% can indicate that the results are not truly representative of a group’s experience. Since the spring of 2009, ASMP has achieved response rates greater than 70% in all three survey groups: early career teachers, mentors, and school site administrators.

## Results of Closed-Ended Survey Responses

An important set of quantitative data comes from closed-ended survey questions, where participants are able to select from a range of established responses. Depending on the content of the question being asked, respondents may be allowed to choose only one from a set of possible responses; in other cases, they may be allowed to choose more than one response. The following AY12 data from 243 respondents indicate that ASMP is making a difference for early career teachers in Alaska:

*Of the success you’ve had as an early career teacher, what proportion would you attribute to help from your Alaska Statewide Mentor?*

86% “A great deal”, “Quite a bit”, or “Some”

*Overall, having an Alaska Statewide Mentor has been beneficial to my teaching.*

88% “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”



## Survey of Superintendents: Mentors' Influence Reaches Beyond ECTs' Classrooms

During the Fall of 2011, ASMP conducted a survey of Alaska's superintendents to determine the effectiveness of the program from the perspective of school district leadership. Of the superintendents of Alaska's 54 school districts, 38 (70.3%) responded to a survey of 17 questions ranging from descriptive and demographic inquiries, to more specific impacts of ASMP's service within districts. Highlighted questions and results are as follows:

*Question 16— Rate your overall experience with the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project.*

- 97% of districts with intimate knowledge of ASMP are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the project.

*Question 10— Do you feel mentoring by the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project has helped increase retention of early career teachers in your district?*

- 84% of districts with intimate knowledge of ASMP feel that the project has helped increase teacher retention "a lot", "quite a bit" or "some".

*Question 11— Do you feel mentoring by the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project has helped to improve student achievement in classrooms of early career teachers in your district?*

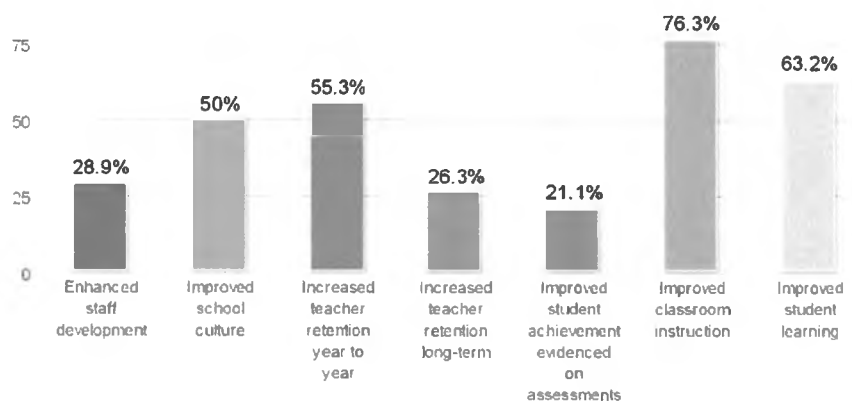
- 88% of districts with intimate knowledge of ASMP feel that the project has helped improve student achievement "a lot", "quite a bit" or "some".

*Question 12— Do you feel mentoring by the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project has helped to improve instruction in classrooms of early career teachers in your district?*

- 89% of districts with intimate knowledge of ASMP feel that the project has helped improve instruction "a lot", "quite a bit" or "some".

Respondents were also asked the ancillary question, "Do you feel ASMP has impacted your district (not just the early career teachers receiving mentoring) in any of these areas?" Respondents were presented with a check-box system that enabled them to select as many applicable responses as needed from a listing of prescribed categories. The results show that superintendents view the presence of ASMP in their districts as having a positive impact on classroom instruction, student learning, year-to-year teacher retention, school culture, and staff development, among other areas.

**Effects of ASMP Beyond ECTs' Classrooms**





## Open-Ended Responses from Site Administrators

Survey responses from administrators of schools served by ASMP align with other feedback the Research Team has solicited, and continue to validate the positive impact that Alaska Statewide Mentors have on early career teachers and their schools.

### ***What is most effective about the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project? Why?***

Providing new teachers, who are often new to Alaska, with a mentor is extremely important to the success of our teachers. Our small schools limit the opportunity for mentoring within the school [...] the ASMP provides teachers with quality mentors who know about more than content. These [mentors] provide insight and training on a multitude of AK-specific issues (community relationships, cultural differences, etc) that take years to learn.

It gives our beginning teachers another strong support tool to assist in providing quality instruction during those first critical years. They are able to work closely one on one with our beginning teachers to lend tools, knowledge, learning and teaching strategies, and support, even beyond what the principal or others are offering.

Teaching is a difficult profession, especially for new hires. The mentor project helps to ensure that new teachers have a professional connection, resource and confidant. Having a mentor increases teacher success and efficacy, therefore increasing teacher satisfaction and retention.

### ***How would a reduction in mentoring services impact your school and/or district?***

Reducing the mentors means more instability and continued disenfranchisement of new teachers! We want these new teachers to not only stay in our communities for a good length of time but we want to see them have resources they can utilize to improve their own professional development and be successful as a teacher for a very long time!

Retention of high quality teachers is an on-going struggle for our district. Our students' needs are often unique to this place, in this time. It is not an easy population to serve. Support and development is vital for our new teachers to succeed.

The opportunity to have a mentor observe and instruct a new teacher in the areas that are challenging or weakest. Being able to guide them to a place where they make the decisions to change and grow with out being formally evaluated. The information that a mentor can share is so beneficial and the project has made it very user friendly so that teachers can implement the strategies right away.

I truly appreciate that the mentor has more time to offer my beginning teacher than I do! My beginning teacher has stated that both her principal and her mentor agree on those things that could be improved, and it adds validity to both folks. She's improved considerably, and that's great considering she was terrific when I hired her.

Working in Alaska is unique, in itself, and adding an off-road and extremely rural setting for new teachers can be overwhelming. The project is very necessary to help newer teachers have success right away for their career and the students in their classrooms.

Because of the mentoring program my first and second year teachers are the ones that become my best team leaders at the school-wide level. The mentoring program gives them some confidence and works them through some of the sticky points that we have all had to work through the hard way. Without the program I'd be responsible to do this on my own.

In rural settings, a reduction of mentoring services would mean new teachers leaving the job and possibly the profession. Mentors provide both personal and professional support, a blend of what is needed to make it over the obstacles of the early career teacher.



## Open-Ended Responses from Early Career Teachers

### *Problem-Solver*

My mentor has been a very important support as a colleague, confidant, role model, instructor, and friend and has made all the difference in my growth as a better teacher. My mentor is always there to serve and support rather than be critical. Whenever we collaborate, my mentor's approach is "what can I do to help?" rather than, "this is what you did wrong and what you need to change".

### *Assessor*

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with my mentor. She is always willing to listen and assist with suggestions and feedback. She has helped with dealing with challenging students and situations and provided many engaging and meaningful classroom activity ideas and resources. She has made my classroom a better place in many ways! I don't feel I am being critiqued but more so supported, encouraged, and guided.

### *Coach*

I love my state mentor and the state mentor project. Without this project, I would no longer be teaching.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have [worked] with a mentor. I could not have made it through the year without [him].

### *Teacher*

Thank you for providing me with great advice and many resources. Your counsel has been priceless. When I was scattered, you never dropped the ball once. Endless thanks for your quality professional advice and meaningful friendship, both of which are occasionally in short supply in the bush.

### *Facilitator*

My mentor is a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the profession. He provides helpful ideas in the classroom such as the breathing exercises and student portfolios. He is a great guide and provides help without infringing on the flow of my classroom.

### *Learner*

She does an excellent job. She goes above and beyond to help in anything we may possibly need. She is constantly e-mailing and bringing resources to us. She e-mails on regular basis to keep in touch and calls on a regular basis as well. She makes herself available and is understanding when we are swamped and do not get back to her right away. I couldn't ask for a better mentor.

### *Advocate*

I loved working with my mentor. At first it was intimidating to accept her visits, because I was worried about criticism, but it was an unfounded worry. She had been very respectful, professional and sensitive towards me in her interactions with me. I appreciate her insightful presence at this early milestone of my professional carrier. It made a huge difference regarding the overall outcome of my success at work.

### *Trusted Listener*

Visits were very important and useful for me. Being able to bounce ideas off of another person who was not a colleague or evaluating me was very useful.

She has been an unbiased third party to help me deal with issues within my school and has given me excellent resources (books, websites, ideas) and advice throughout the year.

### *Collaborator*

Your pleasant and caring attitude always made it comfortable to be around you and discuss situations as a teacher without the fear of my ranting being passed on to someone else. Your numerous resources, materials, and skills have built my confidence and made me a better teacher.

### *Resource*

I don't think you need to do anything different. You are always there to support me, and I know how to get in contact with you if I need to. Your observations and questions are helpful in my classroom, and I think you are the perfect Mentor! Keep up the good work!



## The Many Roles of the Mentor

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March 12, 2013

Members, House and Senate Education Committees

Subject: University of Alaska SB241 Report: *Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools 2013*; Response to Questions of the Joint Education Committee, February 27, 2013

Attached are more detailed responses to legislator questions raised during the University's SB241 report presentation to the Joint Education Committee on February 27, 2013. As you will see, some questions will take longer to answer as we engage in research around these issues. That said, we will continue to provide you with answers and information as they become available.

The University of Alaska takes its role and responsibility seriously in preparing teachers for Alaska's schools. The Board of Regents endorses the UA system's *Strategic Direction Initiative*, which emphasizes productive partnerships with Alaska's schools as well as accountability in all that we do. We're taking significant steps toward improving the quality and quantity of our teacher graduates, getting them placed, and mentoring them for success. These steps include growing the number of high-demand special education teachers, hiring experienced and dynamic faculty and deans, and listening carefully to our statewide education partners and employers. We're using good research (from the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research and others) and a collaborative approach to 'move the needle' toward more quality Alaskan teachers in Alaska's schools. We're partnering through the Alaska Teacher Education Consortium to continue this focused, collaborative effort. We'll hold ourselves accountable in coming years, and report back on our progress.

In making these efforts, we note that there are many factors outside of the University's control that impact recruiting students into the education profession and placing graduates into teaching positions. Such factors include teacher salary and benefit packages, teacher layoffs (especially in urban school districts), and challenging living conditions for teachers in rural areas. To be truly successful in improving the quality and quantity of teachers in Alaska we need the help and collaboration of all involved with education in the state. No one simple solution exists: all of us have a role to play in making a substantive and measureable difference.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions for us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Powers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Powers  
Chair of the Academic & Student Affairs Committee  
University of Alaska Board of Regents

Cc: Patrick K. Gamble, President, University of Alaska  
Pat Jacobson, Chair, University of Alaska Board of Regents  
Dana Thomas, Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Alaska  
Richard Caulfield, Provost, University of Alaska Southeast  
UA Education Deans

/Attachment

- 1) Rep. LeDoux asked: What is the impact of housing issues in rural Alaska on teacher retention?

Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) staff, in collaboration with National Science Foundation-funded faculty at UAF, are conducting a survey of teachers across Alaska, exploring the factors contributing to teachers' job satisfaction and their decision to stay or leave their current position. We will be asking about a broad range of factors including school leadership, community support, housing cost and quality and family considerations. We expect to have the preliminary results of this survey by the end of June and will report our findings back to you.

- 2) Sen. Stevens asked: What are university efforts toward moving paraprofessionals to certificated teacher positions?

All three units of the UA system have programs that encourage paraprofessionals to move into certified teacher positions. There is a special need to do so in rural Alaska where skilled and culturally-grounded paraprofessionals play important roles in student success. Such programs are not new in Alaska—they date back to the 1960s and 70s (e.g. ARCTIC, X-CED). Commonly they were grant funded and declined when those funds went away. It is important to note that many paraprofessionals need to take substantial numbers of lower division, general education courses, and not just the two years of teacher preparation coursework, in order to complete a teacher education degree, so this process often is more involved than many realize.

Examples of current programs include:

- UAA Chevak Teacher Education Initiative, a privately-funded effort to move paraprofessionals into certificated teaching positions or to help them obtain “highly qualified” status.
- UAF's School of Education is working directly with the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) on providing advising and an on-going partnership toward providing coursework to allow all of the LKSD para-professionals to work toward a BA in Elem Education and an elementary teaching license. LKSD has approximately 53 associate teachers or para-professionals and the district would like to see them all become certified since this will provide strong support for their new dual language immersion program. UAF also continues to collaborate with the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District on developing ways its paraprofessionals can complete the required coursework for becoming certified teachers.
- UAS has had success in recruiting rural teachers through its *Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska* (PITAAS) program. Its new B.A. in Special Education has recruited paraprofessionals into the program and is focusing new recruitment efforts on pre-service teachers. We note that many of existing paraprofessionals are non-traditional students and require additional support services in order to be successful.

- 3) Rep. Reinbold asked: Do we need to grow the teacher education programs?

Yes, but we also need to significantly improve teacher retention, especially in rural Alaska. The greatest demand for teachers currently is in rural areas and in specialized programs like special education, math, and science. We need to encourage and provide incentives for talented Alaskan teacher graduates to prepare for these positions. Moreover, we need to focus on growing an interest amongst Alaskans in the field of teaching, especially among rural residents. Alaska needs to increase the number of young people graduating high school and entering the university system. We need to explore the ways to incentivize more people to want to become educators, particularly in rural Alaska. We need to continue programs for young Alaskans interested in teaching careers: programs like Future Educators of Alaska and PITAAS. But more is needed from a broad coalition of entities.

In saying this we need to understand and address challenges facing Alaskans who are considering becoming teachers. Changes in the teaching profession may be affecting the attractiveness of the profession. Examples include increased testing of students and a national spotlight on teacher performance, salaries that are not competitive, reductions in retirement and health benefits, lack of career development programs, and challenging cultural and linguistic conditions in many rural schools. Alaska's two largest school districts announced planned layoffs this year and Fairbanks cancelled its job fair for recruiting new teachers; these very public announcements make it very difficult to encourage students to pursue careers in education. Finally, the critical tone of the national and state conversations about teachers and teacher preparation programs too often negatively impacts recruitment efforts.

- 4) Rep Wilson asked: Have there been changes in the university teacher education programs to prepare future teachers for the challenges of today's students?

Yes, education programs are continuously evolving based on technology changes and changing accreditation standards All UA teacher education programs are nationally-accredited by NCATE (now Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation or CAEP), one of two federally-recognized professional accrediting entities. Central to that accreditation is *continuous improvement* in all aspects of teacher education. We evaluate our programs regularly to meet changing state and national requirements for teacher education preparation and curriculum content standards. We hire experienced faculty who frequently come from successful careers in the teaching profession. We provide those faculty and many existing teachers with professional development opportunities, including in the use of new technologies and pedagogies associated with them.

All UA teacher preparation programs offer curricula designed specifically to prepare our graduates to teach in diverse Alaskan contexts—curricula that are culturally responsive and place-based. The goal is for teachers to improve student learning by making state and national standards and district curriculum requirements relevant in whatever context they are in.

- 5) Sen. Stevens asked: How many teachers move from rural to urban teaching positions?

The number of rural teachers moving to urban schools averages 50 per year. Table 1 presents the average number of teachers moving between rural and urban Alaska annually from 2000-2001 to 2011-2012, by whether they stayed or changed region, for urban teachers and rural teachers. The number of rural teachers moving to urban settings is smaller than the average number of rural teachers moving into an administrative position within a rural district (55). Table 2 shows the average number of teachers becoming an administrator annually by whether they stay in their region or move between rural and urban Alaska.

**Table 1: Teacher Mobility Between Urban and Rural Alaska**

		Stayed in Region		Changed Region		
Average, 2000-01 to 2011-12	Average # of Teachers	Stayed a Teacher	Became an Administrator	Stayed a Teacher	Became an Administrator	Left Alaska schools
<b>Urban Teachers</b>	5622	5018	89	15	3	497
<b>Rural Teachers</b>	2574	2070	55	50	2	396

**Table 2: Average Number of Teachers Becoming Administrators by Region To Which They Move**

	Total	urban to urban district move	rural to urban district move	rural to rural district move	urban to rural district move
Average number of teachers becoming administrators	76.5	42.3	3.3	30.0	0.9

- 6) Sen. Gardner asked: How transferable are credits between the education programs at the three MAUs?

Overall, credits within the UA system transfer readily from one unit to the other. UA Board of Regents policy and MAU practice are heavily weighted toward providing students with an opportunity to take classes across MAUs. This includes transfer of credits between teacher education programs at UAA, UAF, and UAS.

- 7) Rep. Saddler asked: How much of the need for special education teachers are we filling at present? What about the Board Certification in Behavioral Analysis?

*Special Education Teachers*

CAEPR is producing an update of the report on teacher supply and demand, and we are focusing on issues of special education teacher supply and demand, working with an expert in this field. We will have information to share in mid-April 2013. The update will be disseminated to all committee members. We do know how many current special education teachers are UA graduates. As Table 3 shows, 28.7% of all current special education teachers in Alaska are UA alumni and 83% have taken coursework at UA (data from 1,221 special education teachers listed in the AK DEED Certified Employee Database, fall 2011).

**Table 3: Special Education Teachers Prepared In University of Alaska Programs**

AK DEED Certified EE Database Statewide Count, Fall 2011	SPED		All Teachers	
	1,221	100.0%	8,934	100.0%
Alumni of the University of Alaska	350	28.7%	3,340	37.4%
Alumni of a UA College/School of Ed	263	21.5%	2,021	22.6%
Alumni of UAA College of Education	161	13.2%	1,148	12.8%
Alumni of UAF School of Education	22	1.8%	382	4.3%
Alumni of UAS School of Education	102	8.4%	572	6.4%
Enrollee at the University of Alaska	1,014	83.0%	7,859	88.0%
Enrollee at a UA College/School of Ed	858	70.3%	6,302	70.5%
Enrollee at UAA College of Education	579	47.4%	3,929	44.0%
Enrollee at UAF School of Education*	67	5.5%	651	7.3%
Enrollee at UAS School of Education	560	45.9%	4,208	47.1%

\*UAF's SPED program is new and just started graduating students this past year.

*Behavioral Analysis Certification*

Certification in Behavioral Analysis requires graduate level studies and a 1600 hour internship supervised by a certified Behavioral Analysis analyst. Currently, there is not a program in-state and students pursuing this certification are doing so through online programs. At UAF, the topic of Behavioral Analysis is discussed in both of our classes addressing autism as an effective intervention, especially with preschool autistic children.

- 8) Rep. Reinbold asked: How are we closing the gap identified in the 2008 legislation authorizing this report?

Closing the gap in producing quality Alaskan teachers is taking place on multiple fronts, both inside the UA system and by others. We're seeing some successes in areas like preparing special education teachers--we've increased their numbers significantly in recent years and they are finding employment across the state. All UA units continue to focus on programs to prepare teachers for rural Alaska, whether they are paraprofessionals or new to the teaching profession. In all of our programs, *continuous improvement* in the quality of teacher preparation is our focus.

Having said this, a major issue in Alaska continues to be teacher retention. Indeed, the problem for many of our schools is less a shortage of teachers than a failure to retain the educators we recruit each year. Our ability to recruit more students into teaching is affected by the profession's relatively low pay for the preparation required. It is true that Alaska's starting teacher salaries are the 6th highest among the 50 states and that average teacher salaries are the 8th highest. However, the cost of living in Alaska is considerably higher than in most states, and is especially so in rural areas (often 30-40 % higher than Anchorage).

Moreover, it is difficult to recruit math and science majors into teacher careers when other fields pay far better than teaching. Table 4 shows national starting salary averages for different positions; it shows teachers as the lowest paid among a broad range of professional fields.

**Table 4: Average Starting Salaries for Teachers and Other Professional Jobs**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Researcher (non-technical)</b>	<b>Management Trainee</b>	<b>Registered Nurse</b>	<b>Accountant (public)</b>	<b>Field Engineer</b>
\$34,935	\$37,541	\$42,123	\$51,341	\$47,453	\$52,277

The issue of salaries may be particularly pronounced for talented Alaska Native graduates from the UA system. Anecdotal information suggests that those Alaska Native graduates often have a variety of employment opportunities upon graduation—with ANCSA corporations and businesses, tribal entities, engineering firms, health corporations, and so forth. Reports suggest that these employment opportunities for the best and brightest of Alaska Native graduates are commonly higher than starting teacher salaries. More research is needed on this topic.

The forthcoming CAEPR survey of teachers will help identify areas to target in order to keep more teachers. Research on teacher mentoring programs will identify ways in which we can support new teachers so that they are more successful and more likely to persist.

- 9) Sen. Gardner asked: How are schools and districts finding special education teachers to meet their needs, given the shortage?

Enhancing financial support for prospective special education teachers has proven successful in increasing the numbers of special education teacher candidates in the past. For example, the Anchorage School District until recently subsidized funding for its employees to secure special education qualifications. However, recent budget cuts discontinued such support. This has had a negative impact on applications for UAA special education admissions (down 28% from AY2012) and the number of admitted & enrolled candidates (down 21.5% from AY2012). Similarly, a federal grant providing financial support to students in the UAA Master of Education in Early Childhood Special Education recently ended. As a result the number of admitted and enrolled candidates in that program is down 33.3% from AY2012.

- 10) Rep. Saddler asked: What are the master’s degree programs we offer and what are the benefits to a master’s degree?

At all three MAUs, students can earn a Master’s Degree as part of their initial certification for teaching in a secondary content area. In addition, there are more specialized masters in Educational Leadership (Principal Certification), Special Education, Counseling, and other programs offered at one or more of the campuses (see Appendix B: UA Education Certification Programs in the SB241 report). Salary scales for teachers with a master’s degree are higher across Alaska, making this an incentive for some (generally a Master’s Degree is worth about \$3000 a year extra salary). Moreover, some districts cap teacher advancement if they do not have such a degree; the current Anchorage School District teacher contract specifies that teachers hired as of

the 2011-2012 year and later are required to have a Master's Degree after reaching a Bachelor's Degree plus 36 continuing education credits in order to advance further up the salary scale.

11) Rep. Wilson asked if we offer classes for teachers to help them adapt to using technology?

Across all three MAUs, teacher candidates use technology in both their UA classes and in their school experiences. They maintain an electronic portfolio and are taught to use the most relevant educational software. In all teacher education programs students use laptops as a regular part of their classwork and fieldwork. Commonly, these tools are refreshed on a regular rotation to support current standards. Students and faculty alike often participate in regional and statewide workshops on educational technologies, like the recent Alaska Society for Technology in Education (ASTE) conference in Anchorage.

UA units are also expanding full programs that incorporate educational technologies. UAS offers two graduate options for teachers. The first is a 36 credit M.Ed. in Educational Technology that is designed to help teachers develop the skills and abilities to make effective use of technology in the classroom. The second is a certificate program for 21 credits that also allows student to develop the skills for effective use of technology in the classroom, and allows them to be endorsed as highly qualified in educational technology. In addition, UAS is proposing a new 18 credit endorsement in Educational Technology that allows teachers to apply up to 6 credits of cutting-edge professional development credit to a certification endorsement.

In the same vein, UAF's School of Education supports an internal professional development program called weTeach. The goal is to provide faculty and staff with up-to-date, ongoing instruction and support for teaching and learning with existing and emerging technologies. We follow a different theme each year. Recent themes included Mobile Learning, Tools and Strategies for Enhancing Distance Delivery, Personal Learning Networks, and Web Presence (this year's theme). Instruction and support are provided through multiple venues, including face-to-face workshops, wikis, and asynchronous repositories of videos, webcasts, and podcasts. In addition to technology infusion in our regular classes, all UAF SOE students are required to take at least two technology courses as undergraduates. UAF also offers a master's degree in Online Innovation & Design.

12) Rep. Seaton asked: How are teacher preparation programs being modified to address the common core standards and especially the new approaches to measurement of student learning? Especially around the measurement of integrated student learning?

UA teacher education students are all trained to incorporate the new standards being implemented in the state, and to employ the new assessment tools that will accompany the standards. While the state isn't implementing a new assessment system until at least 2015, and is only just determining which assessment consortia they will be working with, the UA College and Schools of Education are working to build the new assessment approaches as well as the new standards and associated resources into our curriculum. We have already done this with the new Alaska Content Standards.

At UAS, when the new standards were released they were printed, bound and distributed to every faculty member. The new standards were discussed at faculty meetings and many faculty members attended state meetings or workshops about them. Teacher candidates are required to align their lessons and assessments with the standards. However, at this point many teachers in Alaska are not using the new standards. Therefore, teacher candidates at UAS are being advised to use the standards that the school district to which they are assigned is using.

At UAF, these standards and assessments are emphasized in virtually every education class. We are working closely with the Fairbanks district to make certain that all of our students who do their practica and their internship in Fairbanks are completely aware of and knowledgeable about where the District is in the continually changing guidelines relative to standards. We also make certain we are in close contact with other districts around the state since we are preparing teachers for Alaska – not just for certain districts.

All of our UA teacher preparation programs undergo yearly internal evaluations based on feedback from mentor teachers and their interns, school districts, and employers. These data are coupled with the current state standards to determine what programmatic changes are needed to better prepare pre-service teachers.

- 13) Rep. LeDoux asked: Is it possible to have young teachers mentor older teachers around technology?

Generally, the issue of professional development around current educators' use of technology in the classroom is addressed at the district level. Districts have technology specialists who support teachers in successfully infusing technology into their teaching. The university system offers advanced degree and certificate options in technology and education as described above, which support innovative use of technology in teaching and learning.

That said, younger teachers are often able to mentor older educators on technology; many of our teacher candidates are 'digital natives' and are very comfortable in an electronic environment. Likewise, many interns are more knowledgeable and current on the use of technology in classrooms than many teachers in the schools and teachers have been very willing to learn from our interns.

- 14) Sen. Huggins commented: we need to pay attention to what students are learning, the strategic influence on what students learn. He then asked: what is the pass rate on the Praxis?

UA Education faculty members are continually focused on practices that improve student learning in the classroom. For example, the Statewide Teacher Mentor Project is looking at the link between teacher mentoring and student learning outcomes. CAEPR is looking at whether different kinds of investments by districts are associated with better student results. We agree that what students learn and what affects this is an area to which we need to continue to pay attention.

All UA students enrolled in initial teacher licensure programs must pass the Praxis I in order to do their student teaching. Students must then pass the Praxis II in order to obtain an Institutional Recommendation from the teacher education programs and highly qualified status in their field from the state. The pass rate on the Praxis I is difficult to determine for students not enrolled in teacher preparation programs. Neither UAS nor UAA track Praxis I test score data for students who are not either accepted into a teacher education program or enrolled in teacher education courses.

Our accreditation body, NCATE (now CAEP), requires its accredited and candidate institutions to maintain an 80 percent (minimum) program completer pass rate on state licensure exams in the content or subject area. All of the UA programs exceed this requirement. In addition, average Praxis I scores of students across all three campuses exceed the national median scores. Praxis I pass rates for three years of students at each campus are displayed in Attachment 1 to this memo.

- 15) Sen. Huggins commented that education in Alaska's K-20 environment is a 'closed loop system', noting that UA gets high school students who need remediation, and then we prepare the teachers who go out and teach students, who then may need remediation. We need to be candid and straightforward in addressing these problems.

We in the UA system understand this point and accept fully our responsibility in improving performance in this closed-loop system. The responses in this update and in the SB241 report show that we are working hard on these improvements. We will continue to report to you about results.

Meaningful improvement requires a shared vision and commitment from many parties across the state, including UA. The recently-formed Alaska Teacher Education Consortium seeks to identify common strategies with those stakeholders to lead toward meaningful, documented results. We want to continue this conversation, and in the coming year will share research we are currently doing at the university on issues around school performance and teacher practice.

- 16) Sen. Stevens commented on the relationship with the regents. The legislature needs to meet with the regents. Also it appears the work being done almost combines all three campuses into one statewide college of education – "seamless sounds great to me"

Representatives of the University of Alaska Board of Regents would like to meet with the joint education committees on a periodic basis and will work with the legislature to make those arrangements.

- 17) Rep. Seaton asked about the UA advisor advocate program the legislature funded along with the Alaska Performance Scholarship. Do we have any outcomes from this?

We are in the first year of enhanced funding for advising on our campuses, and while it's too early to make conclusive statements, we are seeing positive trends. Retention from the first

semester to the second is up this year, as is the proportion of students making satisfactory academic progress and they are taking more credits (which imply they should graduate sooner).

- 18) Rep. Gattis asked: Do we have programs in the high schools to encourage students to become teachers, and to take courses at the university?

Recruiting talented young Alaskans into the teaching profession is essential to achieving desired goals. More than 500 high school and middle school students are engaged in Future Educators of Alaska across the state. This program is specifically designed to encourage students to pursue a career in education and dual enrollment courses are part of this program. In addition, the UAF Elementary Education Program is working with the longstanding Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI)—serving talented rural high school students—in providing an ED 245 (Child Development) dual credit course. Future Teachers of Alaska clubs, supported by the UA Office of K-12 Outreach, offer a teacher education course, and a second is currently being planned. Other career pathway programs focusing on talented high school students may have promise, working through efforts like the Alaska Middle College School, a partnership between the Mat-Su School District and UAA that opened this past fall at the UAA Chugiak-Eagle River Campus.

- 19) Rep. Gattis asked: Given that 70% of new teachers hired in rural Alaska are coming from outside, can a student go online to be a teacher without leaving their village?

Yes. At UAS, the entire curriculum for the BA in Elementary Education and Special Education is available online. UAS faculty travel to the rural/remote sites to supervise both practicum and student teaching experiences. At UAF, place-bound students may earn their entire BA in Elementary Education online; this option has been available since 1972. Online or e-learning courses are offered in a number of formats. The University of Alaska defines e-Learning as planned learning that predominantly occurs in situations where a student is not required to be in a predetermined location. Delivery may be by video conference, audio conference, correspondence, tele-courses, satellite telecasts, via the Internet, CD-ROM, and/or video/audio tape. A course may be delivered entirely via e-Learning or by a hybrid of e-Learning and on-campus methods. eLearning may be asynchronous (such as a Blackboard course learning software-based courses that does not require large-group sessions with the instructor) or synchronous, where the class meets on a scheduled or regular basis with the instructor via videoconference, Internet-based software or audio conference. UA distance education programs commonly use a hybrid approach with online and some in-person components.

- 20) Rep. Reinbold asked: We invest a lot in education, and not getting the best outcomes. Is there any specific legislation the university needs to help improve outcomes in education?

Achieving improved outcomes requires Alaskans to have a common vision, shared strategies, and accountability for outcomes. We need to continue this conversation, and make sure that the UA Board of Regents and the Education Committees regularly share their priorities and vision for the UA System and how it can support quality education across all levels in Alaska.

Over the last three years, UA has proposed 9 budget increments intended to improve teacher preparation. The legislature has funded two of these increments. The current FY14 UA budget proposal includes specifically targeted requests to address our goal of Productive Partnerships with Alaska's Schools; some of these requests were in the FY13 budget proposal and were unfunded then. These requests include support for a faculty position in Literacy to ensure that Alaska teachers are able to implement the Alaska State Literacy Blueprint, funding to advance Tech Prep career pathways for career and technical education, funding for Alaska Teacher Placement to support districts in identifying, attracting and placing highly qualified educators into our schools, and funds to advance the work of the Alaska Teacher Education Consortium.

Increasing the availability of comprehensive advising is fundamental to the UA Strategic Direction Initiative theme of Student Achievement and Attainment. The UA FY14 operating budget proposal requests funding to enhance advising services to help students achieve their educational objectives. Funding this component of the UA Budget Proposal will help produce more teacher graduates.

The University believes that increasing broadband access across the state is vital to economic development of the state—impacting entrepreneurship, education, healthcare, emergency services, transportation, and much more. Universal broadband access will propel our efforts to provide quality education to students in all of our communities, include to those seeking to become certificated teachers without having to move to a different community to complete their degrees.

21) Rep. Wilson asked: How many professors teach in the area of teaching future teachers?

In the three Schools/College of Education, there are full-time faculty working primarily with teacher candidates (52 total), and then there are others who teach in other programs (e.g. Educational Leadership, Counseling, Educational Technology) but who also instruct future teachers on occasion (22 total). There are faculty members in other colleges, such as the Colleges of Arts and Science, who teach core subject content area courses, whereas faculty within the College and Schools of Education focus more on teaching methods, curriculum development and so on. Finally, there are many part-time adjunct faculty members who work as mentors and supervisors for field placements, as well as some who teach regular courses.

The number of adjunct faculty members varies considerably at each campus, and also varies to some extent depending on how you define them; teachers who mentor one or two teacher candidates in their classroom can be considered adjunct faculty, as can a retired school administrator teaching two regular teaching methods courses during the summer. The numbers of adjuncts also vary depending on how many interns are in need of field supervision as well as how many faculty are on sabbatical in a given year, with others picking up their teaching load.

The numbers below in Table 5 represent full-time regular faculty and adjunct faculty who primarily teach. They do not include all of the teachers who host teaching interns, nor those

instructors who teach “500 level” professional development courses which are awarded continuing education credit through the MAUs, but are not taught necessarily by employees of the university system (e.g., courses taught during Anchorage School District’s Summer Academy for teachers).

**Table 5: Faculty in the Schools and College of Education by Type of Assignment\***

	UAA	UAF	UAS
Total # of regular (term, tenure-track, tenured) faculty	32	25	16
# of faculty who primarily work in teacher education	23	16	13
# of faculty whose primarily work in other education fields (e.g., Educational Leadership, Educational Technology, Counselor Education, senior administration)	9	9	4
Total # of adjunct teaching faculty	35	24	12

\*UAA Data is for 2011-2012; UAF and UAS Data is for Fall 2012

- 22) Representative Wilson asked: How many faculty travel to rural areas that are off the road system (not an area that a major airline can reach, and not a regional hub but a smaller community/village)

All three UA Education programs provide highly experienced faculty to supervise interns in remote areas. Most commonly, these are regular (full-time) faculty; in providing this supervision they can also then incorporate what they’ve learned into the courses that they teach. Across the three MAUs, about 57% of faculty members have traveled to rural Alaska to provide some form of clinical supervision.

- 23) Representative Wilson asked: How common is it for those Education faculty members to stay at overnight in those rural settings?

The length of stay for faculty supervisors varies greatly but overnight stays are common place. At UAF, some faculty members travel to rural Alaska regularly (e.g., Joan Hornig, Richard Burmeister), while others travel there intermittently depending on the requirements of their present position. During the past three years 74% of UAF fulltime faculty and the majority of our adjunct faculty have been in rural and remote Alaska Native communities. The pattern is the same at UAS—where circumstances of such supervision vary considerably.

The challenges of supervising students in remote communities highlights the limitations of using scorecard-like comparisons of teacher education in Alaska with other states. In so many places in Alaska, supervising student teachers is not a simple matter of driving an hour or two. It commonly means flying in small planes, sleeping on floors in classrooms, being ‘weathered in’, and supervising in diverse classrooms where an Alaska Native language is the norm.

**Attachment 1: Praxis I Passing rates for UAF, UAS and UAA**

<b>UAF (2009-2010 to 2011-2012)</b>					
Group	Number Taking Assessment	Number Passing Assessment	Institutional Pass Rate	Institutional Average Scaled Score	Assessment Cut Score
<i>PRAXIS I MATHEMATICS Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2011-12	95	84	88%	179	173
All program completers, 2011-12	39	39	100%	181	173
All program completers, 2010-11	51	51	100%	182	173
All program completers, 2009-10	46	46	100%	182	173
<i>PRAXIS I READING Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2011-12	96	81	84%	179	175
All program completers, 2011-12	39	39	100%	181	175
All program completers, 2010-11	51	51	100%	182	175
All program completers, 2009-10	46	44	96%	181	175
<i>PRAXIS I WRITING Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2011-12	95	84	88%	176	174
All program completers, 2011-12	39	39	100%	178	174
All program completers, 2010-11	51	50	98%	178	174
All program completers, 2009-10	47	46	98%	178	174
<b>UAS (2009-2010 to 2011-2012)</b>					
Group	Number Taking Assessment	Number Passing Assessment	Institutional Pass Rate	Institutional Average Scaled Score	Assessment Cut Score
<i>PRAXIS I MATHEMATICS Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2011-12	69	65	94%	180	173
All program completers, 2011-12	45	44	98%	181	173
All program completers, 2010-11	63	63	100%	182	173
All program completers, 2009-10	46	46	100%	182	173
<i>PRAXIS I READING Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2011-12	68	66	97%	181	175
All program completers, 2011-12	44	44	100%	182	175
All program completers, 2010-11	62	61	98%	182	175
All program completers, 2009-10	47	47	100%	182	175
<i>PRAXIS I WRITING Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2011-12	68	63	93%	177	174
All program completers, 2011-12	44	44	100%	179	174
All program completers, 2010-11	61	61	100%	179	174
All program completers, 2009-10	46	46	100%	178	174

<b>UAA (2008-2009 to 2010-2011)</b>					
Group	Number Taking Assessment	Number Passing Assessment	Institutional Pass Rate	Institutional Average Scaled Score	Assessment Cut Score
<i>PRAXIS I MATHEMATICS Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2010-11	292	267	91%	180	173
All program completers, 2010-11	85	85	100%	182	173
All program completers, 2009-10	78	78	100%	181	173
All program completers, 2008-09	105	105	100%	182	173
<i>PRAXIS I READING Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2010-11	294	275	94%	180	175
All program completers, 2010-11	85	85	100%	182	175
All program completers, 2009-10	77	77	100%	181	175
All program completers, 2008-09	105	104	99%	181	175
<i>PRAXIS I WRITING Score Range: 150-190</i>					
Other enrolled students*, 2010-11	296	275	93%	177	174
All program completers, 2010-11	85	85	100%	178	174
All program completers, 2009-10	77	77	100%	178	174
All program completers, 2008-09	105	104	99%	178	174

\*other enrolled students have been admitted to a teacher preparation program, but have not yet completed the program. If they have not scored high enough to pass, they have to re-take the Praxis before beginning their internship year. In Alaska, an average score of 174 with no score less than 172 on each of the reading, writing, and math sections of the Praxis I is also considered a passing score on the Praxis I PPST exam. This means that a student can have less than the assessment cut score on one of the three exams and still pass if his or her scores are sufficiently high on the other two. That is why in some instances only 98% or 99% of program completers have passed one of the exams.