

SCOMM

125:7

Kodiak Island Borough School District Participants

In Person:

Betty Walters, Superintendent

Board of Education (I will send those names to you as soon as I have confirmation)

Jack Walsh, Central Office Director/Rural Regional Principal

Patt Gibbs, Main Elementary School Principal

Louis Martinez, Port Lions School Principal

Judy Doyon, Ouzinkie School Principal

Phil Johnson, Old Harbor Principal

George Griffing, Teachers Association President

Teachers, as their schedules permit

Via Teleconference:

Those who cannot fly in from outlying schools.



Kodiak Island Borough School District
722 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Kodiak

a look at the significant issues
facing rural districts and rural
teachers

**Who are the teachers Kodiak
and other districts around
Alaska are hiring?**

A typical new rural teacher profile for KIBSD 1995-2001

- ◆ Recent graduate of an education program or teaching masters program with no previous teaching experience.
- ◆ Certified in elementary education with no one subject area expertise.
- ◆ Recruited at an Alaskan job fair, referred by a friend who teaches in Kodiak or Alaska, or through their persistent efforts.
- ◆ Majority relocating from the Midwest with no Alaska experience.
- ◆ Most stay 1-2 years at their initial placement.

A typical new teacher hire for Kodiak town
schools and other Alaska Urban Districts
1995-2001

- ◆ Recent graduate of an education program or masters program with some previous teaching experience.
- ◆ Certified in area of primary teaching responsibilities if middle school or high school.
- ◆ New teachers in elementary positions have previous experience in district as aides, substitutes, or as former students.

A typical new teacher hire for Kodiak town
schools and other Alaska Urban Districts
1995-2001

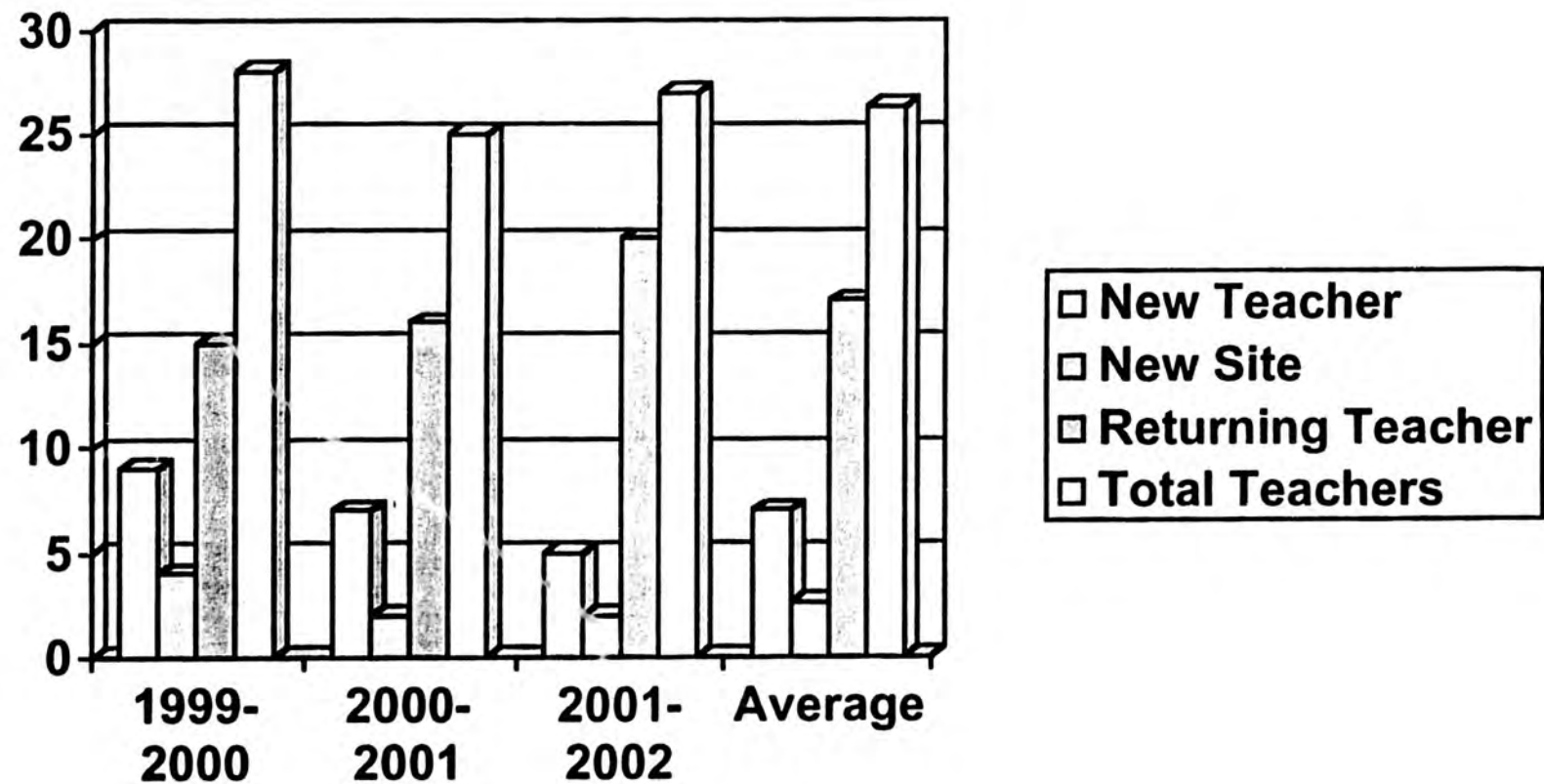
- ◆ Majority relocating from the Lower 48 with no Alaska experience.
- ◆ Many have advanced degrees in area of certification.
- ◆ A growing number of teachers have retired from another state.
- ◆ Most will stay 3-4 years at their initial placement.
- ◆ The average teacher will stay in the profession less than 5 years.

What are the challenges for districts and schools in hiring and retaining quality teachers?

Other Real Challenges

- ◆ Across the state and nation well qualified teachers and administrative candidates are able to be very selective and choosy about their next position from many great regions and locations.
- ◆ The amount of planning and preparation necessary to prepare lessons for six grades and multiple classes and subjects is a difficult task for even the most experienced teachers and seriously impacts personal time and family life.
- ◆ Relative isolation of our villages, and the support a district can provide on a daily basis is a serious concern of staff members.

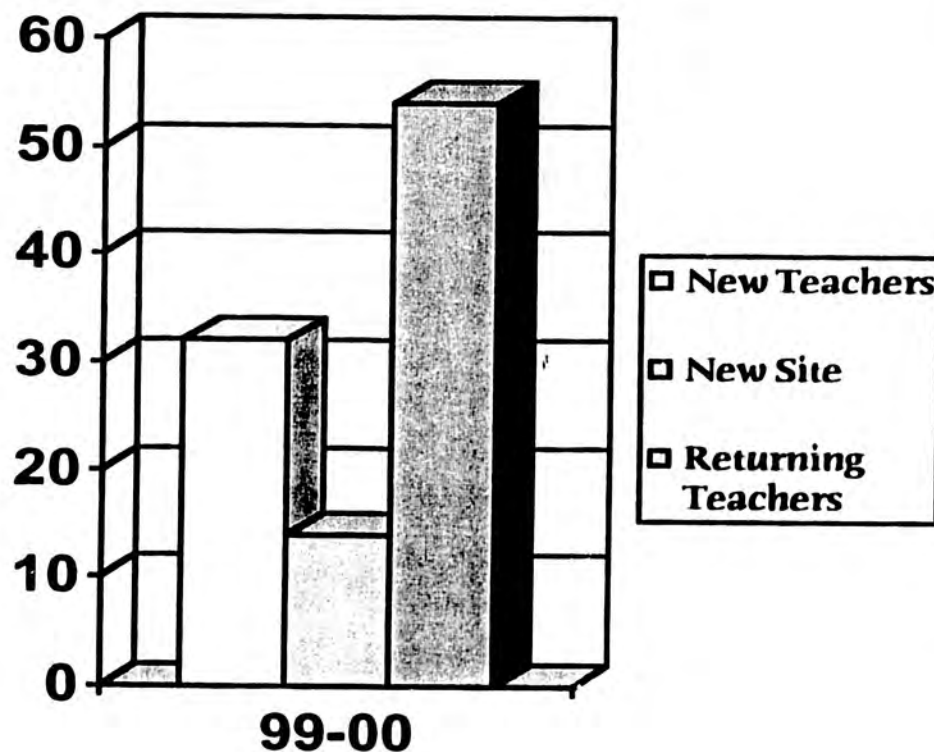
Rural Staffing Patterns in last 3 years for 9 Kodiak villages



A snapshot of teacher movement in 9 Kodiak villages during 1999-2000

- ◆ 28 teachers distributed throughout the village schools in August as school opens.
- ◆ 13 of those teachers(46%) in a new job with the district (9 new to district, 4 others in new sites).
- ◆ One resignation in February, teacher from another village moved to fill vacancy and complete the year.
- ◆ Big Sandy Lake School closes in February, both teachers relocated.
- ◆ One site has two separate sets of teachers for each semester.
- ◆ Karluk and Danger Bay Schools closed all year.
- ◆ By end of year 9 will decide not to return and one will take a leave of absence.

Teacher Percentiles- 1999-2000

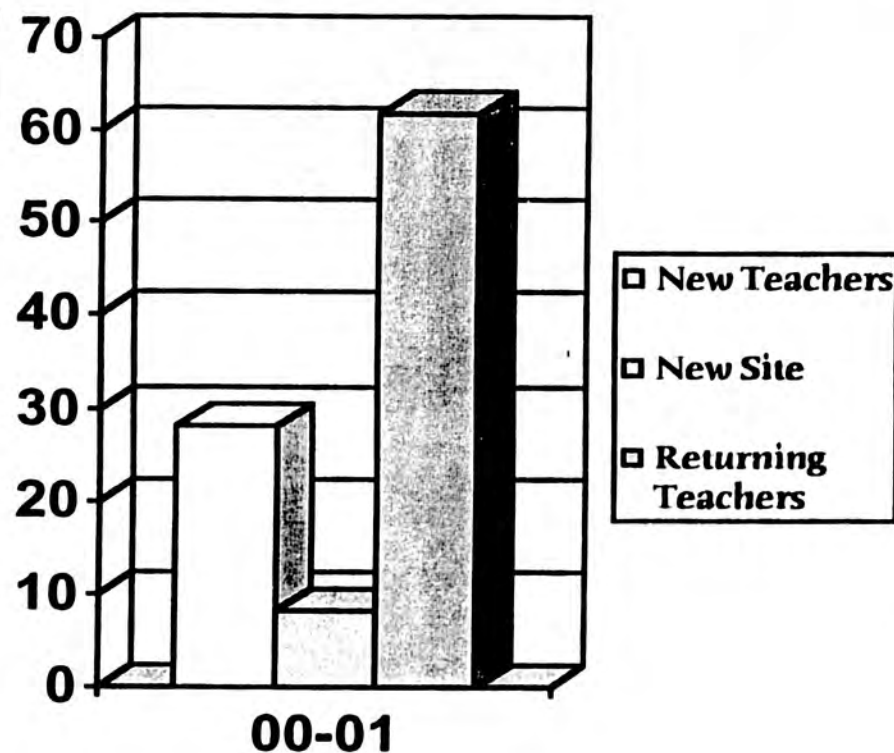


- ◆ 32% of the teachers are brand new to KIBSD.
- ◆ 14% are in new positions since last year.
- ◆ 54% of teachers are returning to same site.

A snapshot of teacher movement in 9 Kodiak villages during 2000-2001

- ◆ Karluk and Danger Bay Schools reopen with plans to stay open all year. Big Sandy Lake remains closed.
- ◆ 25 teachers distributed throughout the village schools in August as school opens.
- ◆ 3 sites open with a single teacher. Students range k-11 in two villages and k-12 in the other.
- ◆ 7 of those teachers in a new job with the district (All are new to district).
- ◆ One teacher transferred in September to fill a grant position in town. One village teacher transferred to fill that gap. A new teacher hired.
- ◆ Teacher resignation in September from a one teacher site, Two new teachers hired to fill vacancy and complete the school year.

Teacher Percentiles- 2000-2001

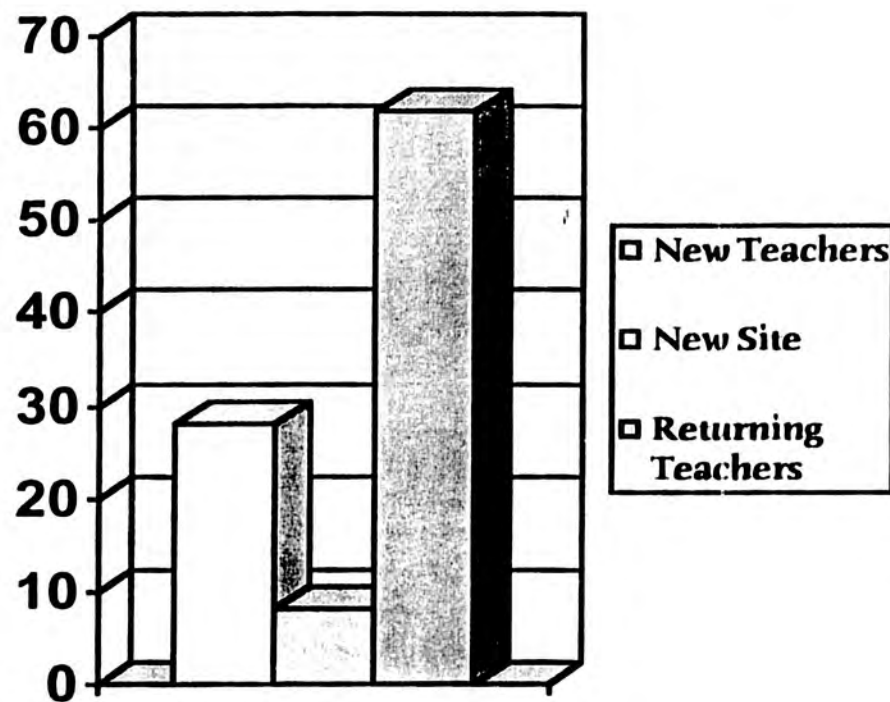


- ◆ 28% of the teachers are brand new to KIBSD.
- ◆ 8% are in new positions since last year.
- ◆ 64% of teachers are returning to same site.

A snapshot of teacher movement in 9 Kodiak villages during 2001-2002

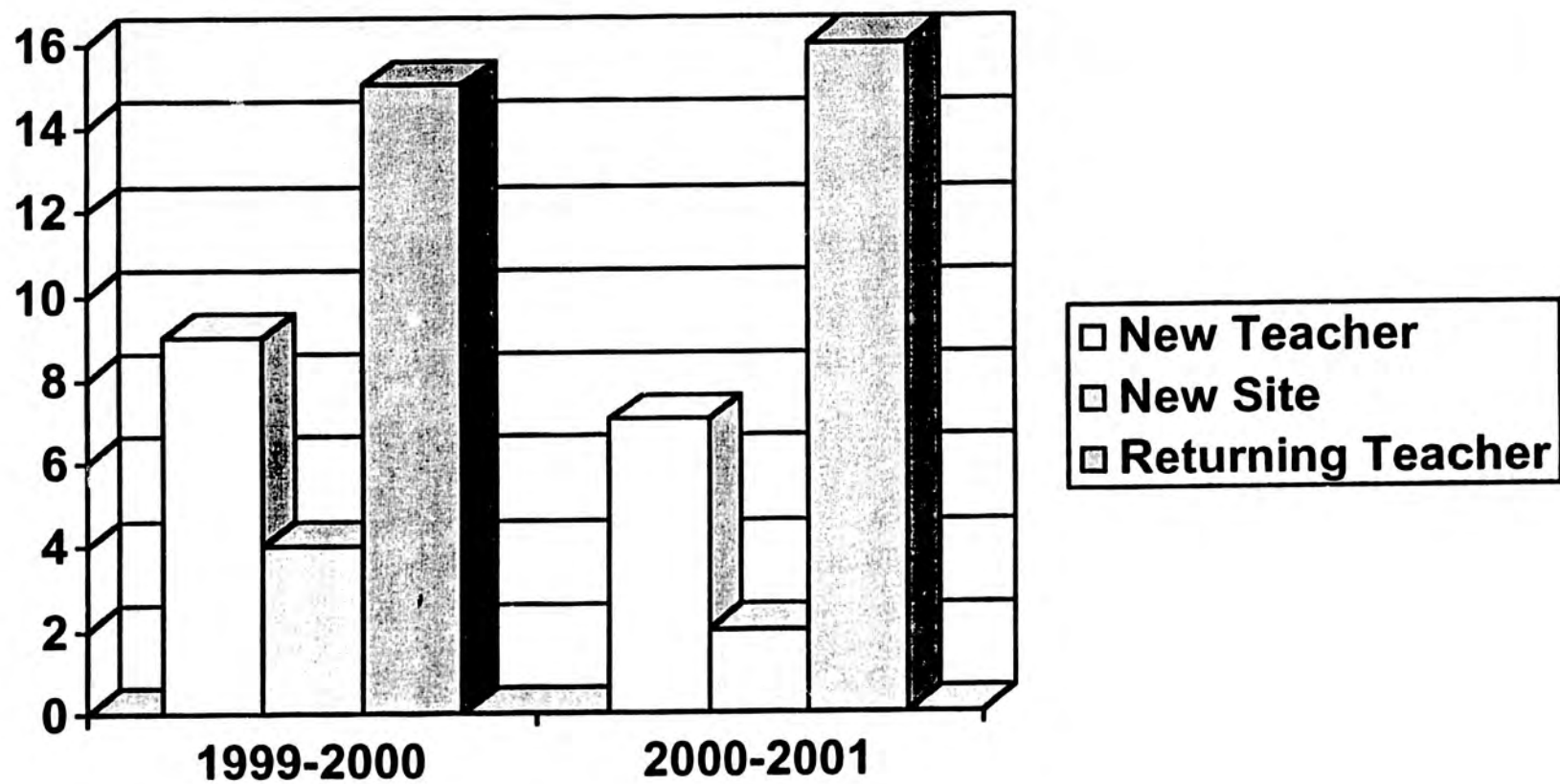
- ◆ 26 teachers distributed throughout the village schools in August as school opens.
- ◆ 1 site open with a single teacher. Students range k-12.
- ◆ 6 of those teachers in a new job with the district (4 are new to district).
- ◆ Karluk School reopens 10/1 with plans to stay open all year. Big Sandy Lake remains closed. New Karluk teacher hired in late September. (7th village hire, 5th teacher new to district rural programs this year).
- ◆ Karluk becomes 2nd site open with a single teacher. Students range k-12.

Teacher Percentiles- 2001-2002



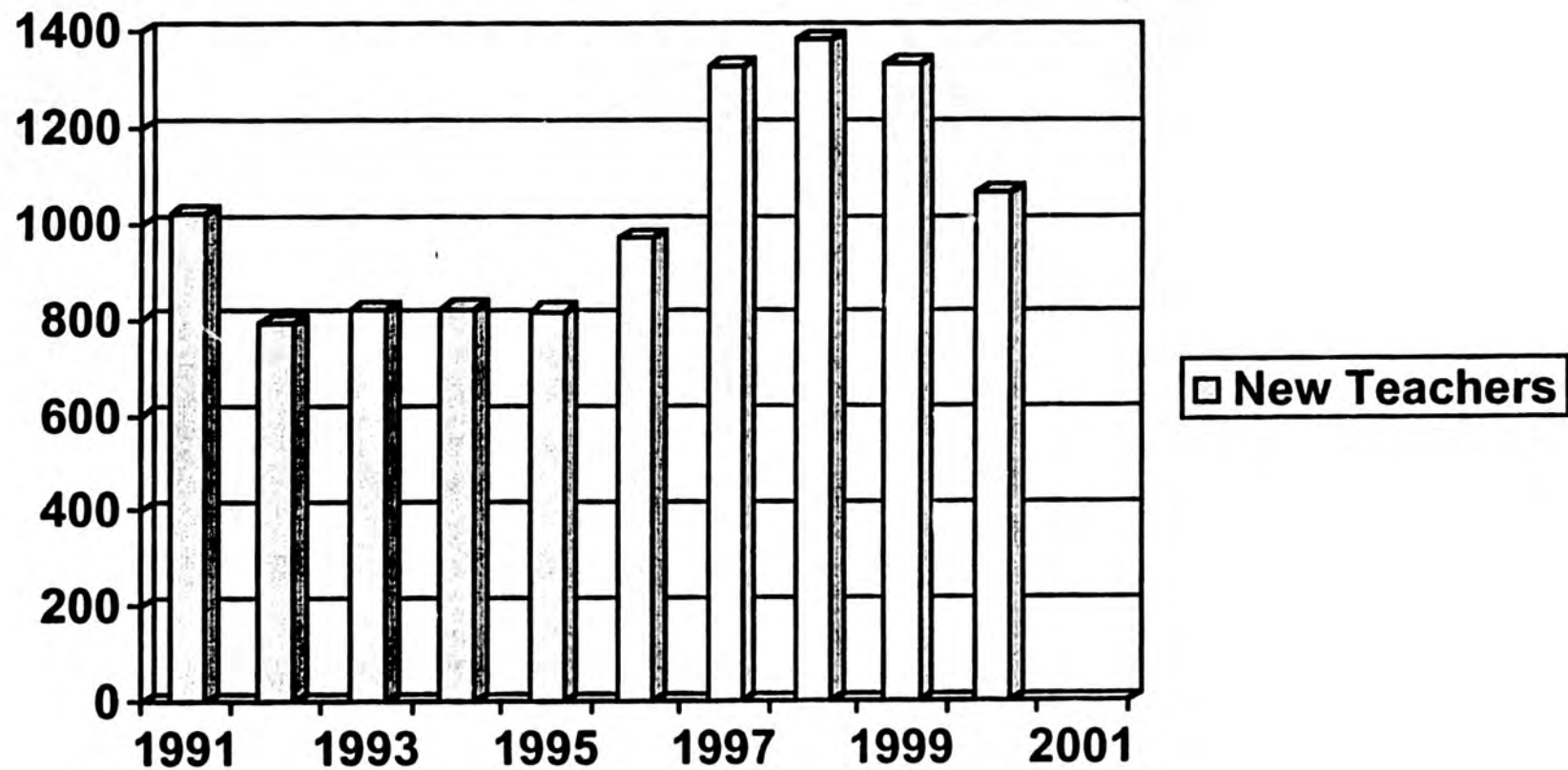
- ◆ 23% of the teachers are brand new to KIBSD.
- ◆ 8% are in new positions since last year.
- ◆ 69% of teachers are returning to same site.

Rural Staffing Patterns in KIBSD Rural Schools 1999-2000



How many teachers are being
hired on an annual basis
around Alaska?

Total educators hired in Alaska 1991-2001



Other Financial Challenges

- ◆ Districts are paying large signing bonuses for initial employment and in areas of greatest need for multiple years of service.
- ◆ Recruiting often includes an effort to create greater percentages of Alaska Native and other minority teachers through the use of loan forgiveness, signing bonuses, and low interest home loans to qualified applicants.
- ◆ Districts are forced to limit the amount of experience allowed on initial hire and it discourages experienced teachers from applying.
- ◆ Alaska teacher salaries are less competitive now than at any time in the last 15 years.

Major Challenges for Districts

- ◆ Competition across the nation for quality teachers and administrative candidates.
- ◆ Recruiting a well-trained teacher corps that is representative of our community, and includes greater percentages of Alaska Native and other minority teachers.
- ◆ Finding teachers trained to work across multiple grade levels and ages with multiple credentials and successful teaching experience.
- ◆ Addressing the issues of educational equity and adequacy as each relates to rural programs.

More Rural Challenges

- ◆ Rural Alaska offers limited opportunities for young persons and professionals in personal/social relationships, entertainment events, and other important outlets.
- ◆ The digital divide that exists is still significant in many rural Alaskan communities.
- ◆ Poor generator and electrical service in rural villages further exacerbates these issues.
- ◆ Many rural Alaskan communities still have limited housing options for teachers and little chance for teachers to buy houses and property which later become their homes.

Challenges for the future

- ◆ Entry level careers in education pay significantly less than other positions requiring similar educational experience and degrees.
- ◆ The salary gap is larger at the mid career level, and even greater for professionals after 20 years experience.
- ◆ Demands on teachers in public education settings continue to grow with little additional support for professional development and training.
- ◆ School safety, overcrowding, and related concerns head the list of reasons why many don't choose education careers.

Challenges for the future

- ◆ A lack of public confidence, and public support in the educational establishment creates a sense of futility and concern for those considering careers in education.
- ◆ Student numbers in the smallest rural communities continue to drop and threaten the existence of these same schools and job stability.
- ◆ The current teaching professionals are aging and as they near retirement an increasing number of new professionals will be needed to fill those vacancies.
- ◆ In previous generations teachers stayed in the profession and usually the same district through their whole career.

Thanks for the opportunity to
share these ideas and concerns.

I appreciate your continued
support of public education and
the children of Alaska.

The Kodiak Island Borough
School District appreciates your
interest in public education,
your support of our dedicated
teachers and administrators, and
the quality programs we all
want for children.

Karen,

I will continue to work on this list and hopefully have some more completed and to you in the next few days.

Betty Walters

There are any number of concerns that educators might realize as they consider employment in the State of Alaska. Those that have come to my attention are included in the list below although some may fit many other school districts across the State of Alaska. Hopefully this list will allow legislators an opportunity to be somewhat prepared for what they may hear on Kodiak Island.

- Cost of certification. Dual/triple charges are assessed of applicants if requesting more than one certificate type - Type A (teachers)/B (administrators)/C (specialists) are the common certificates sought although several others exist.
- Salary as compared to home area. Salaries have been on the rise for several years in the lower 48. While educators often left family and friends for a better life style, they can now remain in comfortable surroundings, support systems, and often a lower cost of living
- Travel to and costs associated with job fairs both in the state and outside. Often people attending Job Fairs have been attending school full time and do not have the finances to travel to locations around the US and Alaska. Additionally, student teachers and teachers do not have the opportunity to travel beyond their teaching location for several days at a time.
- Cost of living in rural and remote areas. Expenses associated with getting food and other necessities into remote areas impacts a new teacher's finances.
- Giving up family and friends in home area. Home cooked meals, babysitters, family celebrations, etc are often missed with distance between teachers and their immediate and extended families.
- Housing facilities for staff in remote or extremely remote areas. Educators often give up the amenities to which they are accustomed. Flush toilets, hot showers, bath tubs for young children, washers and dryers, fenced yards for toddlers, running water, insulated walls, roofs, floors, household furnishings are often non-existent.
- Cost of utilities in rural and remote locations. Fuel and electricity when

available are very costly particularly in rural and more remote areas. Insulation is not always adequate making the matter worse. Floor covering is not always available adding to the cost of heating the home.

- Jumping through the hoops as an applicant for the State, District, and the Alaska Teacher Placement Center. Districts have varied applications, the certification requirements and costs often pose problems when directions are not followed explicitly, expectations of different school districts often confuse applicants who are running from one interview to another,
- No mentors exist, particularly in one/two teacher schools. Teachers, even those with the greatest education and experience, are "new" to the state, the school district, the grade level. A guide would be helpful for each new staff member but the cost is astronomical. Self appointed staff often spend incredible amounts of time volunteering to assist new staff get settled in the school site and community.
- Cost of moving from one area to another (state to state, in the state). New hires have expenses associated with relocating to a place that they have not lived or even visited. Apartments and homes are not easily found, are not necessarily energy efficient, and are costly even in comparison to more populated areas of Alaska.
- Cost of finding housing locally. Expectations for first month, last month and security deposit are not uncommon. Often the meager places to rent want a full year lease (12 months) while many new teachers want to study, travel and/or visit family during the short time between school years.
- All staff in small sites could be "new" teachers or new to the District. "New" is not necessarily brand new and often educators bring with them certain ideals, expectations of students and community and are disappointed that the dream is shattered when the picture of Alaska is more than a "new frontier"
- Numerous interviews with many districts make a blur.. "Who said what? Teachers, specialists and administrators are often anxious, tired and frustrated at Job Fairs as it is hectic, fast paced time. More people may be talking to perspective educators as the numbers dwindle. This adds to the confusion of some applicants who want to search for the best opportunities
- Being accepted in a small (or larger) community.
- Student loans forgiveness
- Lack of second language teachers within diverse populations
- Honesty of interviewers when describing the District, site, home, activities
- Lack of special services endorsements special education, speech/language pathologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, bilingual, gifted
- Attitude and behavior of interviewers, lack of attention to the applicant

- Contracts in hand of some districts, letters of intent
- Time necessary for informed decisions by applicants
- Changes mind on "Yes, I would love to go to"
- Temporary housing upon arrival
- Meet and greet at airport, ferry terminal
- Material available before deciding - chamber info, newspapers, flyers (safe way, etc.)
- Money upfront to help settle in (utilities, month, month after, deposit)
- Buddy upon arrival - "get settled" tours/dinners
- Activities/buddies for spouses, partners, children
- Classroom mate (grade level/content area)
- What to expect in your school, classroom, small, larger community.
- Telephone distance charges for phone and e-mail
- Advising other Districts of outstanding candidates interviewed but not needed.
- Connecting prospective employees w/ATP
- Not sticking another district with someone a district never wanted
- No money for normal living expenses until first payday

I will continue to work on the details.....

Alaska School District Profiles



Below is the information you have requested.

Kodiak Island Borough Schools

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Kodiak, AK 99615-0000

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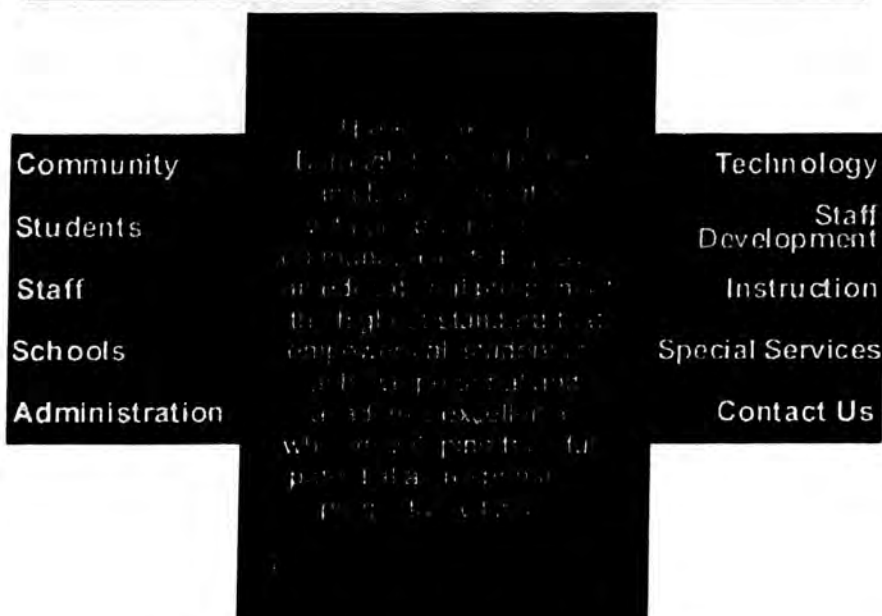
Superintendent: Betty Walters, Superintendent

E-Mail: bwalters@kodiak.k12.ak.us

School Board President: Jeffrey Stephan

E-mail the Webmaster





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Superintendent Betty Walters welcomes students and families.



Kodiak Island Borough School District
 722 Mill Bay Road Kodiak, AK 99615
 (907) 486-9220

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To the families of students on Kodiak Island:

What a great time of year this is for all of us on Kodiak Island. Children and teens have had weeks of various summer activities with families and friends. New and returning staff have been diligently preparing for the next ten months of classroom projects and experiences. Our business and community partners have extended their hands this summer to continue to work with our youth. How quickly summer passes.

Each August, anxiety rises as kindergarten through 12th-graders join friends and classmates in anticipation of the start of school. Soon students and staff will be entering the buildings for the first day of the new school year. Staff have been busy these last ten weeks preparing for their teaching assignments so that your best wishes for your children might be fulfilled.

Each student wants to be successful. Each hopes to learn while enjoying school life. A positive school environment helps students learn and a wholesome school atmosphere hopefully will keep students interested in returning each day. Regardless of the age or grade level of the student, interest in school can quickly fade if the specific needs of the student are not met. That is one reason why it is so important for families to be involved in the school life of their children. Staff can learn so much from the student, the family, and others who have a vested interest in the child's success. Keep us informed as the accomplishments you expect, the improvements you see, and importantly, any lack of progress. Teachers need you to be an active partner in the education of your child. I believe that no one in the District knows a child better than the parent or other family members.

Our work is cut out for us in 1999-2000. As adults or youth, we have a responsibility to do the best that we can to provide the greatest opportunities for teaching and learning. Each of us should have our sights set on improved basic skills coupled with classes to include the arts, career technology, bilingual programs, special education, enrichment projects, and dual credit classes through Kodiak College. Alternative education programs include the Educational Opportunity Program, the Correspondence Program, and the Area Wide School. Rural families will experience greater opportunities for their students to join other students from small schools on the island as we plan academic, vocational, athletic, leadership and social activities for grades nine through 12. The high school graduation qualifying exam and the benchmark exams for elementary and middle school students will be given this spring.

Reading writing and math are the essential skills that must be demonstrated. Informational booklets for parents are available at all schools and at my office.

Let us all continue to focus on student achievement. Nothing is more important. Regardless of the aptitudes and abilities of our children, each one has the chance to do as well as he/she possibly can.

Some students take longer to learn certain concepts. Some learn differently and require more attention to their individual needs. But you and I cannot give up on any child.

If someone you know did not finish high school, I hope you will urge that person to contact me. Several education alternatives for earning a high school diploma are available on our island for students of all ages.

If there is an issue or concern that I might address, do not hesitate to call my office (486-9210) or my home (486-6485). Have a great school year.

Sincerely,

Betty Walters
Superintendent



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